This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

PL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
433 07485542 4

2
G 173 m.

Keep this book Clean.
Do not turn down the leaves.
If the book is injured, or if this slip is torn or defaced, a fine will be required.

377 d			
226			
Eq 2 v	Ja 23 '05		

The Man Who Knew Better

BOOKS BY T. GALLON.

The Man who Knew Better. A Romance. Illustrated by GORDON BROWNE. 8vo. Cloth, $1.50.

Mr. Gallon has written a story which shows the meaning of the Christmas spirit in its broadest sense. His novel is a striking romance of hard-hearted worldliness redeemed by bitter experience, and the lessons of love and sympathy which it teaches will thrill and touch every reader.

Each, 12mo, Cloth, $1.00; paper, 50 cents.

The Idol of the Blind.

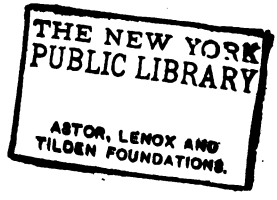
The Kingdom of Hate.

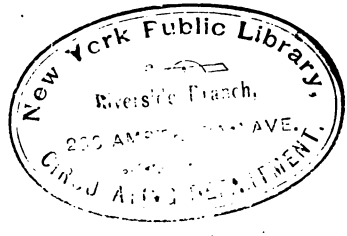
Dicky Monteith. A Love Story.

A Prince of Mischance.

Tatterley.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.


THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.


New York Public Library,
Riverside Branch,
AVE.

"The world is mad about this business of Christmas." (Page 8.)

The Man Who Knew Better

A Christmas Dream

By
T. Tertius Gallon
Author of "Tatterley," etc.

Illustrated by
Gordon Browne

New York
D. Appleton and Company
1901

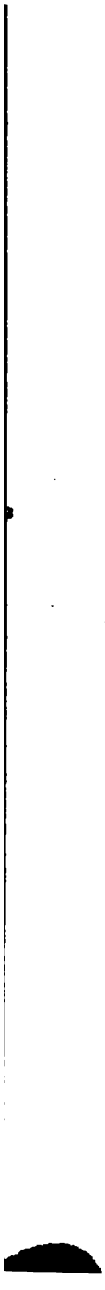
THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
476028
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.
1908

COPYRIGHT, 1901, BY
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

ansfer from Circ. Dept. Riverside Branch JUN 21 1909

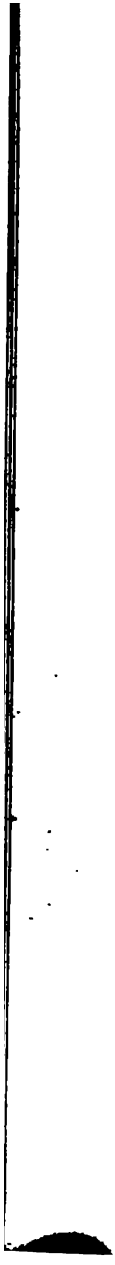
CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	ANDREW JUDKIN DREAMS IN THE FIRELIGHT	1
II.	THE MAN OF NO NAME	24
III.	CERTAIN STROLLING VAGRANTS	49
IV.	THE SONG OF MRS. BLEAK	74
V.	THE NEW KING	94
VI.	LOVE—AND A WAITER	115
VII.	A NIGHT UNDER THE STARS	134
VIII.	THE MAN OF THE STILL FACE	157
IX.	THE SNOW FAIRY	181
X.	"I KNOW BETTER!"	208



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
"The world is mad about this business of Christmas"	*Frontispiece*
Ouseley	7
No room for charity	*facing page* 21
"Andrew Judkin—look at me!"	26
The man of no name	*facing page* 46
The Drama is in a bad way	*facing page* 54
The beginning of the journey	72
"You are poorer than I am"	*facing page* 79
Eva is going out on business	113
The waiter sees a homen	*facing page* 130
Solemnly dancing a jig	131
"I am going to make your fortune" . .	*facing page* 132
"Don't you see, there—there!"	140
The Spirit of his better self	*facing page* 147
The footsteps in the snow	164
The still face	180
Mr. Tolderoy's conduct is peculiar . . .	*facing page* 196
The snow fairy	*facing page* 200
"Never let the stars look down upon me, wandering desolate!"	213
"I know better!"	223



CHAPTER I

Andrew Jukin Dreams in the Firelight

BLACK fog outside, and a wretched drizzle coming through the fog—as though London were holding a discoloured handkerchief to its eyes, and weeping drearily through it. Men coughed and shivered as they plodded along through the streets; and inwardly hoped, with all the optimism that was left in them, that the weather might change before Christmas, and that it might not change for the worse—although that was scarcely possible.

Despite the fog and the drizzle, there was a distinct air—a mere suggestive breath, as it were—of the coming time. The grocers' shops had blossomed out into holly and mistletoe, as though those innocent plants grew, quite as a matter of course, on the premises; the most commonplace boot in the bootmakers' shops walked on imita-

University Library.

tion snow, made of cotton-wool, and had sprigs of holly just where a man would thrust in his foot —quite as though even a respectable bootmaker could not resist having a joke with his customers at that season. In a word, the fog was doing its best, and the drizzle worked hard; but the spirit of Christmas would not be kept down, and asserted itself through everything. Men greeted each other more cheerily than was their wont; business was slackening; and young clerks and old clerks, and solid merchants, and busy shopkeepers, all went about their business as though it were rather a good sort of game, than a mere question of bread and butter.

But there was one man, at least, in London town without a joke in him, and in whom the spirit of the thing found no echo. The fog was fog—and it was a nuisance; it delayed trains, and might mean the wreckage of ships laden with his goods. The drizzle wetted him, and made it less easy for him to get about on business. He saw nothing behind it all; heard nothing of the grand eternal music that wakes once a year, at least, and sets the old world ringing. If you had had the pleasure of Andrew Judkin's acquaintance (that is, if you could count it a pleasure) and had dared to express any such sentiment in his hearing, you would have got one answer, and one only, in reply.

"Don't tell me! I know better!"

That was his creed—his religion—his all. Tell him that there was beauty and charity and kindliness hidden away—and peeping out a little sometimes, God be praised!—behind all the crime and sorrow of the world, and he would have replied in that one formula. Tell him that women wept when men were false, and loved even while they wept; tell him that childish hands touched withered hearts to new life, and wrung tears from weary eyes; tell him that Love still was king over all the wide earth; tell him any one of these things, and he would have laughed you to scorn, and have given you the same reply—

"Don't tell me! I know better!"

Andrew Judkin was a man who ruled his life by measure—and the narrowest measure at that. So many pounds, shillings, and pence bought so much of this, and so much of that, according to the state of the markets; this man could be reached by such a sum, or by its equivalent; that man by so much more or less. Every man had his price—every woman. But he knew nothing of women; they were a necessary evil, and nothing more.

Of course, Andrew Judkin was rich; had he been poor, or had he ever known adversity, he never would have framed that ridiculous formula of his—would have been content, instead, to learn the lessons of life as he found them, and as the humblest might teach him. But everything that An-

drew Judkin had ever touched had turned to gold; and, out of that hard metal, he had beaten and hammered so much of life as he knew; out of that he had built his shadowy hope of a certain respectable sort of Heaven. He was rather glad to hear, when he went to church on Sundays, that its streets and courts were to be paved with gold; that was proper and appropriate.

Andrew Judkin had come home from the City early, on that day of fog and drizzle—first, because the slackness attending upon the coming Christmas had affected even his business; and also because the fog had depressed him, and made him unwell. Ordinarily speaking, Andrew Judkin was as hard as any of the bargains he drove—and that is saying a great deal; and the faintest suggestion of illness made him nervous. So he had gone home to his big solitary house, leaving word that his confidential clerk was to come down, with any papers necessary for signature.

It was a grand house—for Andrew Judkin did things in style, so far as he himself was concerned. You would never have caught him spending money on any one else, unless he was to get something out of it; he knew better than that. But all that he had was rich and sumptuous—his wines of the best—his servants well trained—his furniture and pictures really valuable.

He had it all to himself; there was no denying

that fact. From the great echoing cellars down below, up through the splendid house, to the topmost garret, you would not have found any one belonging to him, save in the capacity of a servant; you would not have heard a cheery voice, or a boisterous, hearty laugh, or anything free and natural. All was subdued there; a flighty, giggling, pretty housemaid was a being unheard of; and the servants were as solemn and highly respectable as their master—the very perfection of decorum and dullness.

Andrew Judkin was in a strange mood that night. Ordinarily, he was not a man of moods; such nerves as he had were of the cast-iron order, not easily disturbed. But to-night, if he had been a more vulgar or less pompous man, he might have expressed himself as having "the creeps"; as it was, he merely decided to see his doctor on the morrow, and inwardly wondered what had put him out. Never before had the great silent house seemed so ghostly; never before had the clock ticked so loudly, or the windows rattled as they did to-night. He found himself glancing from out his comfortable easy-chair, over his shoulder, once or twice, back into the solemn room.

It was his dining-room; and be it noted that, if a man has a tendency that way, there is no room in his house he can make so desperately gloomy and melancholy as that in which he feasts. This room

had tall old sideboards, reaching almost to the ceiling; huge dumb-waiters that gaped at you; and a great dreary expanse of table, that it was quite a long walk to get round. All the silver in it couldn't brighten it—seemed, indeed, to have the sparkle taken out of it, and to give up the attempt at shining in despair.

Andrew Judkin had just twisted about impatiently, to reach his hand to his wineglass, when he half started from his chair, with a cry; a figure stood almost at his elbow. The next moment he caught his breath, and sank back into the chair with a sigh—half of annoyance, half of relief.

"You came in like—like a ghost," he said, addressing the figure. "I didn't hear you, Ouseley."

"I am a little inclined to be silent," replied the man who had entered so quietly. "You will doubtless remember, sir, that I was always to come in unannounced, if expected."

He was a tall man, this Ouseley, and he really had something of the appearance of a ghost, as he stood there in the firelight. He was very thin, and very grim-looking—with narrow sloping shoulders, and a long narrow sloping head, with very little hair upon it. His face, which was cleanly shaven, seemed to have had struck out of it, at some time or other, all expression; it was a face which was never lighted up by laughter, or tenderness, or any *human emotion*. Men feared him, for no particular

reason—hated him, without knowing why they did so. He was always respectful and respectable; always silent. Indeed, he was so respectable, and so silent, that his very boots would scarcely have made a sound on the hardest road, like those of another man. But that such a thing was impossible, it might be said that he had never had a mother (for nothing so tender as woman could have reared him) and had never been a boy. Nothing, in fact, but what he was then.

Ouseley.

Andrew Judkin nodded at him, and held out his hand for the papers which Ouseley held. "You are quite right," he said; "business is business, and you can come and go when you like. Anything important?"

"Nothing, sir. You see, sir, nothing much is done this week, on account of——"

Andrew Judkin held up a protesting hand. "Yes—yes—you needn't tell me; I know what you mean," he said. "As a Christian man, I am bound, of course, to subscribe to the mere bare meaning of the thing; I trust I know my duty in that re-

spect. But that it should interfere, for a moment, with the actual serious business of life—that it should stuff men's bodies with indigestible food, and men's minds with indigestible thoughts, and fancies, and foolish sentiments—is preposterous. Ouseley"—Andrew Judkin gripped the arms of his chair, and half rose from his seat, in his wrath—"the world is mad about this business of Christmas——"

"Stark, staring mad," interpolated the obedient Ouseley, with a nod of the head.

"It rams Christmas down my throat; sends me to bed with it ringing in my ears; keeps me awake at night, with ridiculous carol singing; crams my waste-paper basket, with appeals for this, that, or the other; besets me with men who touch their caps, and leer, and with women who bob at me, and get in my way. Men, who ought to know better, send me pictures of starving waifs on doorsteps; what on earth have I to do with starving waifs? I pay my rates and taxes; I am a decent citizen—eh, Ouseley?"

"I should have put it more strongly than that, sir," said Ouseley.

"I am asked to rejoice, at the worst season of the year—and to lose money by it; I am asked to keep — or help to keep — wretched children who ought never to have come into the world at all, and who do nothing but breed disease and crime

among us, no matter what we do for them. And I can't pick up my daily paper, without reading of Christmas prospects—and Christmas this—and Christmas that; I am told that, once in the year, at least, men look with kindly feelings on each other—forgotten friendships are renewed, and the devil is pushed into the background. Bah!—all moonshine! Don't tell me; I know better!"

He had worked himself into quite a heat about it; had risen from his chair, and was pacing about the room. He stopped at last, opposite the other man, who had not moved, but had merely shifted his eyes to follow his master's movements—and thrust his hands into his pockets, and laughed—in an odd, abrupt sort of way, and rather like a man whose laughing organs had grown rusty, from want of practice.

"Why—you'll scarcely believe it, Ouseley," he said, in a lower tone—"but the infernal thing has even entered into *my* mind to-night, and upset *me*. I saw, as I drove home this evening, all the busy streets alive with people beginning to make holiday—fathers buying toys for their children; women, with scarce a shilling to call their own, packed into drapers' shops, to spend good money on finery. Then I came home here—and somehow I couldn't shake the thing off me. The world must have gone mad indeed, Ouseley, when it affects me, and makes me dream."

The confidential clerk started, and stared at his master—almost as though he did not quite understand what had been said. Andrew Judkin nodded slowly, with his eyes on the fire, and with the very ghost of a smile—or it might have been the flicker of the firelight on his face—playing about his mouth.

"Yes—Andrew Judkin has been dreaming," he went on, speaking almost as if to himself. "Sitting here alone, some ridiculous old thoughts have come back to me—some stupid old remembrances, that have nothing to do with business, or the strong, sane world in which we live. Look here, Ouseley—do you know who that is?"

Still with that curious half-dreamy air upon him, Andrew Judkin took up the tall candlestick from the dining-table, and held it high above his head—flaring it mockingly toward a picture, which hung over the high old-fashioned mantel-shelf. The room had been so deep in shadow that, unless one had known of the existence of this picture, one would scarcely have noticed it. And, above all things, it was a strange picture to be found in the house of Andrew Judkin; for it was the picture of a child. Quite a young child, with fair curling hair, and a smiling mouth bubbling over with happy laughter.

"Do you see that picture, Ouseley?" went on Andrew Judkin, flaring the candle at it again. "Pretty—isn't it? Observe the grin on the face."

"Decidedly pretty," replied Ouseley, regarding it intently. "It's curious—but it seems to remind me——"

Andrew Judkin laughed, and set down the candle. "That was me—once," he said, grimly. "It is probable that the artist flattered me; that's a trick the rogues have. At all events, if it was ever like me, I have grown out of it. I was seven then; now I'm fifty-seven; half a century makes a difference."

Andrew Judkin sat down again, and thrust his hands into his pockets, and looked at the fire; Ouseley remained standing. After a little pause, the master went on speaking again, in that curious subdued voice.

"Fifty years! It's a long time—a very long time; but I've done things in those fifty years—eh?"

He might have said, with equal truth, that he had done men—gripped and strangled them—worn the lives out of them—broken the hearts of them. Perhaps Ouseley understood that unexpressed part, for he nodded slowly, and glanced at the other man.

"Fifty years—and in not one of them have I looked back." He sat upright in his chair; the dreaming mood was past; the old dominant strength of the man had come back to him. "Don't talk to me of sentiments, and charity, and love and ten-

derness; it's all a mockery and a sham—a something wherewith men cheat themselves, and smugly cover up past sins. I prefer to stand for what I am; to cry to all the world—the hard world, look you, Ouseley—'I have wrung gold and power from you; I drive to-day among you, a man of wealth and position; I care nothing for your namby-pamby talk of gentleness and forbearance. The poor are poor through their own vices; the rich are rich by their own merits. Success is the only real virtue; and God is good to the man with full pockets.'"

Mr. Ouseley rubbed his hands softly, and nodded again. "Very true—very true, indeed," he murmured. "I have always felt—although, of course, it was not for me to say so—that a man who meets with adversity meets only with what he deserves; is, in fact, getting a sort of foretaste of the punishment that awaits him for his sins in—in another place."

"No doubt—no doubt," responded Andrew Judkin, virtuously. "Indeed, I could give you an instance of that—a very terrible instance, but true, nevertheless."

"I should be greatly interested," said Ouseley.

"I had a younger brother; we have not met for more than thirty years. Our father was a poor country gentleman; a man who gave us a decent education, and but little else. I remember he was foolish enough to say to me once, that he held me

responsible for this younger brother of mine; that I should, in fact, look after him—take the place of a sort of father to the boy myself. Perfectly preposterous, of course—but just the sort of thing a man of no experience in the world would be likely to say. I had quite enough to do, in those early days, to make a position for myself; the boy had to find his feet, as I had had to do."

The remembrance seemed to be a disturbing one, lightly though he spoke of it; he twisted his fingers nervously one over the other, and glanced again at that earlier portrait of himself as a child. A long silence was broken by Mr. Ouseley.

"What became of your brother?"

"Fortunately for me, and unfortunately for himself, he took all responsibility off my shoulders, by running away, and taking up a vagabond life. He had ambitious dreams; did not care for business; and joined a troupe of strolling players. It was, of course, a shock to me, and a blow directly aimed at the position I was endeavouring to make for myself—but I lived it down. I heard from him once or twice; I even received appeals from him for assistance——"

"To which you paid no attention, of course," broke in Ouseley.

"No attention whatever," went on Andrew Judkin. "I reminded him that, in this world, every man had to fight for himself; I felt that it would

—would encourage him to strive for himself, if I left him alone. Later on, I heard that he had married; then that he had a daughter. That was nearly twenty years ago; I have heard nothing more."

"And you've been thinking about all this to-night?" asked Ouseley.

"Yes. I don't know what took me back over that old track—or what made me think of myself as a stupid grinning boy. Except that I suppose the sight of all the lighted streets—the thought of all the mad world, wasting its substance in riotous living—made me remember this brother of mine, and his daugther (both, in all probability, in abject poverty, if they are alive)—and made me think that the girl will be just of an age to marry, and to perpetuate the blunder her father made. That's the crime of it, Ouseley; that these people—poverty-stricken and useless members of society—should be allowed to marry, and to help to pauperize the world."

"It's positively criminal," murmured Mr. Ouseley.

"That's the one word for it—criminal," exclaimed Andrew Judkin, rising from his chair. "And then people dare to talk to me of the beauty of love! The kindness of the poor to the poor! Don't tell me—I know better!"

He turned to the table, and spread out the papers Ouseley had brought—glanced rapidly through

them, and asked a few questions in a business-like tone. Suddenly his stern face clouded, and he turned quickly to Ouseley.

"That conference in the North!" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you remind me?"

Mr. Ouseley's face looked more blank even than usual. "I'm extremely sorry, sir," he replied, apologetically—"it quite slipped my memory." He glanced nervously at Judkin. "Never knew such a thing to happen before. Nine-thirty to-morrow morning—isn't it?"

Andrew Judkin nodded, and glanced at his watch. "I've just time to do it comfortably," he said. "Lucky I thought of it. I'll go by the sleeper. Where are the papers?"

"At the office," replied Ouseley. "I'll take a cab, and fetch them; I'd better meet you at the station."

"Never mind—I'll go myself; it's on my way. Kindly ring the bell."

Orders were rapidly given; well-trained servants hurried about; and, ten minutes later, Andrew Judkin was racing toward the deserted city, on the way to his office. The fog was as dense as ever; and, until the cab actually pulled up, with a jerk, at the door of the office, he hadn't the least notion of where he was. He jumped out hurriedly, calling to the man to wait; put his key in the lock, and went in.

The offices of Andrew Judkin were on the ground floor of a great old-fashioned block of buildings, in a narrow street, in the very heart of the city. Solid prosperity shone from the big brass plate, with his name upon it, on the outer door, and from another big brass plate on the doorpost; riches winked at you from the polished brass rails above the desks of the clerks in the outer office; confronted you solemnly in the great safe let into the wall; and proclaimed itself, most strongly of all, in the heavy, padded-leather furniture in Andrew Judkin's private room. Just as Andrew Judkin turned into the place, he saw that it was lighted feebly, by one small electric light, which hung over a desk; and he heard, to his annoyance, the voice of a woman, crooning a song softly to herself, in a high old cracked voice.

> "To the bloo Alsashun Mount'ins,
> Come a stranger—in the Spring;
> An' 'e lingered by them fount'ins—"

Andrew Judkin strode forward into the office, at this point, and brought his fist down smartly on one of the desks. There was dead silence at once; then the sound as of some one coming hurriedly from the inner room. A moment later, an old woman, grasping the handle of a broom, stood in the doorway of his private room, peering out at him.

Surely the strangest looking old woman that ever was seen! She might have been a hundred years old, at the very least, to judge from her appearance; yet she was strong and active, and had a cheery, smiling old face, that looked out bravely on a world that had not treated her too well. A one-sided old woman, as from the long carrying of pails and other heavy things in one hand; a slip-shod old woman, with footgear of no particular style, or fashion, or texture, or shape; a willing old woman, more than content, if her betters would give her leave to handle a broom and a duster, and gain a morsel of bread thereby. Her bonnet was all over one ear—not from natural rakishness, but as though in sheer good-humoured carelessness, as a detail not worth considering. A shawl, of no known colour, and with a mere shabby tracery of pattern showing here and there upon it, as a reminder of what it had been in its palmy days, hung negligently from one shoulder; she had a fashion of reaching one arm right over her shoulder, and scratching herself violently between the shoulder-blades, in a frantic endeavour to keep this shawl in place, and to reach it when it coyly slipped away from her.

She stood now, blinking at the great man before her, and letting herself go at the knees, in a species of spasmodic salute. She had not the least notion who he was, or what he wanted; but, through her

half-blind old eyes, she saw that he was well dressed, and, as such, some one to be bowed to.

"What on earth are you making that noise about?" said Andrew Judkin, roughly. "And what are you doing here, at this time of night, in any case?"

"Askin' your pardon, sir, I 'adn't no idea as 'ow any one was about. You can't think 'ow a little bit of a toon do cheer the 'eart at times, sir! As I've said a many times, it fair makes the broom go of itself—an' the coldest water don't seem 'alf so freezin' to the fingers, w'en you takes yer floors a bit at a time, wiv a verse to each bit, an' the chorus fer the skirtin' boards. I give yer me word, sir——"

"There—there—that'll do," interrupted Andrew Judkin, impatiently. "I don't want to hear any such nonsense. I suppose you are the person employed here to clean the place—eh?"

"Bin 'ere this five year, sir, an' mos' 'appy for the shillin' or two it brings in, sir. There's some as 'as dared to say I'm a gettin' past it; they don't know me, if they says that. My eyes ain't what they was, w'en I was a young gel; I've wept a many bitter tears in me time—an' that ain't the best thing for the eyesight. But, please God, I'll peg along, whiles ever I can 'andle a brush, an' do as well as the best of 'em."

Andrew Judkin had been looking at her curi-

ously, while she spoke—looking at her with something of contempt and wonder—wonder, perhaps, that any one in this world could be so blind, and have made such a poor bargain with life, as to be compelled to slave away, for a pittance, on the very edge of the grave, like this. He saw nothing of the beauty and the splendour—how should he?—of the thing; knew nothing of, and cared less for, the brave indomitable old spirit, that would not be broken, and that lived finely and cleanly, on a mere nothing. All that he saw was that this was a matter which touched himself. He glanced at his watch; saw that he had plenty of time to catch his train; and gave her the first staggering blow, then and there.

"You don't know who I am—eh?" he asked. Truth to tell, he had never seen the woman before; such people did not come near him, in any sense; and he had never happened to come to the place when she was at work, before this night.

"I was jist on the point of askin' you meself, sir," she responded, cheerfully. "I was that took aback, w'en you come in, that I couldn't make up me mind——"

"My name is Judkin; I am the master here," he said. "The wages you get—I don't know what they are—come out of my pocket."

Suddenly, to his intense surprise, she came toward him, dragging her broom behind her, in a

half-hesitating, nervous fashion. Getting within a yard of him, she stopped, and began to speak eagerly.

"I 'adn't no idea, sir, who you was; I asks yer pardon 'umbly." She doubled up again at the knees, in that extraordinary salute. "An' it do seem as if you'd bin sent 'ere by the blessed angels—it do; 'cause I've 'ad it on me mind to try an' git at yer, some'ow or uvver——"

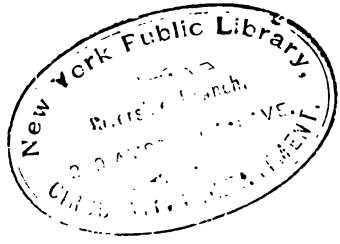
"Get at me? What do you mean, woman?"

"To ask yer a favour, sir," went on the old woman, eagerly. "It's on'y a few days to Chris'-mas, sir, an' I thought, maybe, you wouldn't mind a givin' me a bit of a Chris'mas box—a little bit afore you would in general, sir. It's a bold thing I'm askin', but the thought of wot it means to me makes me bold. Sir—it's only a few shillings—quite enough, sir, God knows, for the work I does—I gets every week, an' I'm grateful and thankful for it; but, at this time, there's sich a many things to be got—a little extry in the way of Chris'mas things——"

Her voice had trailed off, and died away. The blind old eyes could not see the expression on the man's face, but she had heard him laugh. Yes—God forgive him for it!—he laughed, as he seldom laughed at anything; he, the strong man of wealth and power, pitted his laughter against the piteous appeal of this old wreck of a woman.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.



No room for charity.

"Well—this is absolutely the finest piece of impudence it has ever been my lot to encounter," he said, grimly. "On your own confession, you are so old, and so decrepit, that it takes to this hour at night to get through your work; in effect, you are almost useless——"

"Beggin' your pardon, sir," she broke in, eagerly—"there ain't a place in all this great city wot 'as its brasses polished like these, or is kept so sweet an' clean."

"Don't interrupt me!" exclaimed Andrew Judkin, impatiently. "I have heard about you, from Mr. Ouseley; he tells me that you are long past work, and that he only keeps you on here out of charity. Don't speak; remember your position—and mine. Now, let me tell you this: I have no room in my life, or in my world, for charity—and this place is not an infirmary, nor a hospital. I pay a certain amount, for services rendered; and I buy the best services money can obtain. In this world, if a man pays for a thing, he should see that he gets his money's worth. Do you understand that?"

The poor old creature began to tremble. "But you surely don't mean——"

"I mean that I have no use for any but those who do their work well, and earn what I pay them thoroughly. I shall instruct Mr. Ouseley to employ some one younger and stronger than you are; give me your key, and take yourself out at once. Christ-

mas box, indeed; I never heard such impudence in my life!"

She moved a step nearer to him, and dropped her broom, and clasped her withered, gnarled old hands appealingly. "For the love of God, sir—don't do it!" she whispered, brokenly. "There ain't nobody 'as 'ad a 'arder fight for it than I 'ave—an' not for meself. Sir—if you can find it in your 'eart to be so 'ard on a ole woman, wot 'as on'y done 'er best always—listen to me fer the love of my baby! Not mine," she went on hurriedly, almost touching him with her hands, in her eagerness—"not mine—although my own flesh and blood. It was for that I asked for the Chris'mas box; an' I'll take all that back cheerful, if on'y you'll keep me on. It can't matter, so long as I does the work; I'll toil on me bended knees all night, if maybe, w'ile I can crawl, if you'll let me do it. You couldn't send me back to the baby—my gran'child, sir—to tell 'er that there ain't food for Chris'mas—you couldn't do it! I was gettin' a sixpence or two to-gevver, to make a little treat for 'er—an'——"

She might as well have cried to the stars, for all the mercy she hoped to get. Andrew Judkin pointed to the door, and held out his hand for the key.

"You're wasting time—my time, which is valuable," he said. "Give me the key, and go. I'll put out the light, and lock the place myself."

She fumbled in her pocket, and got out the key, and laid it in his palm. He went into his own room, and set about to find the papers he wanted. Glancing up once, he had a glimpse of her, through the open door, leaning against the corner of one of the high desks, weeping forlornly and hopelessly; when he looked up a little later, she was gone.

"I'm rather glad I came down to-night," he said, tucking the papers into his pockets. "If one had many of these people to deal with, one would be robbed right and left. I'm glad Ouseley spoke about her; I think he said her name was Bleak. Well, it doesn't matter about that; I've done with you, Mrs. Bleak, at all events. A Christmas box, indeed! That's like all these people; they'll screw money out of you—all they can get—and spend it on drink. Grandchild, indeed!—a pathetic, pretty sort of lie, worked up on the spur of the moment. She needn't tell me; I know better!"

Very well satisfied with himself, he came out, and locked the office; got into the waiting cab, and was driven toward the railway station. He thought, as he drove along, how much more dense the fog had become; and pitied himself a little, for having to take such a journey in such weather.

CHAPTER II

The Man of No Name

THERE were a great many travellers at the big railway station that night; happy travellers, bound for distant homes, and filled with pleasant anticipations of coming Christmas festivities; busy travellers, rushing about after strayed luggage; angry passengers, impatient at supposed delays. Andrew Judkin secured the best place he possibly could, feeling more intolerant than ever of this ridiculous business of Christmas, which dislocated traffic, and filled trains with people who had no business to be travelling at all.

Being, however, a man of resource, and quite liberal with his money in any question affecting his own comfort, he managed to get himself shut into a little compartment of the corridor train alone; spread out his rugs, and nestled back on the cushioned seat, and prepared to make the best of a bad business. Almost before the train had started, Andrew Judkin was fast asleep.

In that sleep, he dreamed a dream. The years were stripped away, and he stood again, a little child, on the very threshold of life—dreaming, as

a child will do, of all that the years were to hold for him, and all that he was to do with the infinite possibilities within his grasp. Andrew Judkin must have been rather a nice boy at that time, before prosperity hardened him, and beat out of him whatever of humanity he had once possessed; the man smiled in his sleep, as he thought of how friends had petted him, and made much of him, and had predicted all that he would do in the future. A little later, and he saw himself growing impatient of the humdrum life of his father's small house in the country, and of his own meagre allowance; later yet, and he was in London, with his foot firmly planted on the first round of the ladder of success, with a determination to get to the top.

At that point, the dream became pleasant enough: success had come to him; many men pointed at him envyingly, and whispered stories of his power and his wealth. Andrew Judkin half woke —glanced out at the black night—and then went to sleep again.

The second part of his dream sprang, as it were, from the first, and yet had nothing to do with it; it was altogether an unaccountable sort of business. For he dreamed that he was back again in his own sombre dining-room, seated before his fire, as he had sat that very night—alone. Yet not alone; for he was conscious that something else was in the room—he dared not say, even to himself,

what that Something was. He dreamed that, in perturbation, he sprang from his chair, for some unknown reason, and caught up the candle; and looked at the picture over the fireplace, as he had looked that night.

The picture was gone; the frame was empty. Even while he flared the candle nearer to it, to

"Andrew Judkin—look at me!"

examine more closely into this extraordinary thing, he thought he heard a voice behind him in the room, and stood still, afraid to look round, and with the candle in his hand.

"Andrew Judkin—look at me!"

He turned then, and set the candle do

looked. At first, he saw nothing; but presently, lowering his eyes a little, he started, and almost cried out. The picture—or the figure in it—had come out of the frame, and stood, apparently alive, and round-limbed, and strong, before him.

The picture—yet not the picture. For the face of the happy boy no longer smiled; the laughing mouth was drawn into one grave, stern line. Strange as it may seem, Andrew Judkin, in his dream, felt that he trembled before that small figure, and scarcely dared to look at it.

"Andrew Judkin—look at me!"

"I—I'm looking," retorted Andrew, a little shamefacedly.

"You look in your mirror every morning, when you shave?" asked the childish voice.

"Every morning." Andrew began to feel that he must put this child in his proper place. "What of it?"

"Is your face anything like mine—anything like this?" The figure touched one small round cheek with a small finger.

"That's rather an absurd question," replied Andrew Judkin. "Fifty years generally change a man—eh?"

"Not as they changed you, Andrew Judkin," replied the child. "Through how many years have I hung above you there, and watched, in silence, while those years changed you, and spoiled you,

and crushed out of you all that was good, and fine, and noble! You don't seem to understand what a lot of wrong you have done to me—what a lot you owe to me, and have never paid."

"I don't understand that at all," replied Andrew, in perplexity. "I owe you nothing; I owe no man anything; I pay down on the nail."

"What has any payment of yours, in your poor bargaining and bartering, to do with me?" asked the child. "Suppose you had died, at the time I came to life—at the time I was painted—what then?"

"God forbid!" exclaimed Andrew Judkin, piously.

"It would have been better—far better," replied the child. "If you had died then, you might have lingered in the memory of those who loved you, tenderly and strongly—might have led those who knew you to think of better, sweeter things, because you had thought of them, and shown the way. Andrew Judkin, if you died to-night, is there any man or woman, in the great world, that would be sorry—except for what they might lose by your death, in sheer hard cash?"

"I don't see that that matters," retorted Andrew Judkin, obstinately. "When a man gets to my age, he expects to lose his friendships—to drop them behind him; he has other things to live for."

"He has not—he has not!" cried the child, passionately. "The love men draw about them, on their journey through the world, sanctifies them—purifies them—fits them for Heaven. When, at the last, a good man lays himself down, to sleep his last sleep, there shall be no angels about his bed so potent, and so strong to plead for him, and for his imperfections, as the spirits of those he has cheered and gladdened on earth, while he lived. For every gentle deed that he has done, to ease the way of some less fortunate brother or sister, a hundred hands shall be stretched out then, to beat a pathway for him, that shall lead him to the stars!"

"I don't believe it," growled Andrew Judkin. "It all sounds very pretty, and very nice—and you may tell such things to milk-and-water babes—but you can't tell me. I don't believe it—I know better!"

"The time shall come, Andrew Judkin, when you shall know better yet," replied the child, sternly. "The time shall come, when the little knowledge you possess—the poor cunning that teaches you how to get the better of your fellow-man—shall avail you nothing; when you shall learn, in a wider school, the lesson all men must learn, if they would live at all. The time is coming swiftly, [redacted] these things, at which [redacted]n you, when you

shall be taught that they are true—when you shall learn that good-will and love, and tenderness and charity, shall endure while the good old earth rolls on; and when men like you, who pervert these things, have passed away and been forgotten. Wake up, Andrew Judkin—wake up—and come out into the world!"

Andrew Judkin started awake, and found himself shaking from head to foot with terror. There seemed no reason for it, save that vivid dream; he was alone, and only the black night outside. Far off, through the fog, he heard the whistle of the engine screaming; the train had slackened in its headlong speed, and was almost at a standstill. As he started to his feet, a sudden gust of wind made the windows rattle, and a blinding shower of sleet was flung against them. Scarcely knowing what he did, he thrust open the carriage door, and looked out.

Immediately before him was the wet soddened gravel of a little country platform; all in black darkness, and intensely still. The train had stopped, and the whistle was still screaming.

Then it was that Andrew Judkin had a dim fancy that that childish figure was floating on, through the fog and the sleet, beside the train, beckoning to him. Forgetful of everything, and scarcely knowing why he did it, Andrew Judkin stepped out on to the platform, and looked about

him. Even as he did so, the whistle screamed once more, and the train, with a jerk, went on.

This sudden exit from the train had not been noticed; the passengers were curled up comfortably in corners, asleep, or trying to get to sleep. Only when the train was gone, and the last red light of it had disappeared round a curve of the line, did Andrew Judkin realize what he had done.

The train was gone; there was no possible doubt about that. Where, a moment or two before, a row of warm, comfortable lights had been, the fog had closed in again, shutting out even the gleaming rails below him. His travelling bag, rugs, papers—everything was gone. Behind him, certain dim shadowy buildings indicated the outline of the little country station.

"This is a nice fix for a man to be in!" muttered Andrew Judkin, savagely. "That comes of dreaming; I can't think what possessed me to get out of the train like that; it's perfectly ridiculous. I've lost my luggage—I shall lose my appointment in the morning: I shall lose things on which that appointment depends. And all because I've been idiot enough to dream about Christmas—and a picture I ought to have burned years ago—and a few other things of that kind. Ugh!—how devilish cold it is! Well—I suppose where there's a railway station there should be people; I'll wake 'em up, whatever t

He stumbled along the platform, and came to a door; tried it, and shook the handle viciously; it was locked. He tried another, with the same result; finally stood, in the middle of the platform, and raised his voice in an impatient shout.

"Hullo!—Hullo, there! Is any one about?"

The fog swallowed up his voice—or most of it; what was left rumbled and echoed about the place, and was flung back from the buildings—from the railway embankment, on the other side of the line—from the line itself. But there was no other response.

"Well—this is lively!" exclaimed Andrew Judkin, thrusting his hands deep into the pockets of his great travelling coat, and savagely kicking at the gravel under his feet. "The whole place seems to be locked up for the night, and every one to have gone away. However, where there's a railway station, there should be a town, or a village, or something of the kind. I must find a way out."

That was more easily said than done. Every means of ingress or egress, attached to the station, was securely locked and barred; even a dreary yard, at the side of it, in which a few carts and trollies stood, was protected by great gates, which were padlocked. Finally, after much fumbling about, and much cursing of himself, and the fog, and the railway company, and everything else, animate or inanimate, he could think of, Andrew Jud-

kin scrambled down on to the line, in the hope to get clear of the station, and down into the road which must surely skirt it.

And, just as he did so, there nearly came an end of Andrew Judkin, and of this story. For, while he was carefully feeling his way, and stumbling among the gravel and loose stones between the rails, there came a sudden trembling of the earth —a rush, and roar, and shriek—and a great train flashed past him, with a row of dazzling lights showing for an instant out of the fog—and was gone. The very wind of it had flung Andrew Judkin backward, and he found himself clinging to the edge of the platform, shaking and trembling, and gasping with fright.

"This is horrible!" he muttered. "Another step—and I'd have been cut to pieces. I ought to get damages out of somebody for this—out of the railway company, perhaps. Carriage door unlocked —train stopping, where it ought not to stop; if ever I get back to London alive, I'll have something out of 'em for this!"

Keeping as close to the platform as possible, and listening intently for every sound, he scrambled and slipped along, until the wooden edge of the platform to which he clung suddenly dipped away; he had come to the end of it. Turning sharply to the right, and so getting clear of the rails, he fell full against a signal post; saw, immediately in front

and below him, a dim line, where the embankment on which the railway was built abruptly ended; and, beneath that, a dim, impenetrable bank of fog. He was afraid to move a step farther, lest he should go over the edge. Clinging to the friendly signal post, he raised his voice again, and shouted loud and long.

To his intense relief, after a moment or two, there came an answering shout—down below him; straining his eyes, he saw, through the dense fog, the gleam of a light; heard muffled voices speaking.

"I'm up here—on the railway—can't get down," shouted Andrew Judkin, clinging to the post, and peering over. "If you have a light there, whoever you are, bring it up, and show me a way down. I'll reward you well."

Again the slow murmur of voices below; then the light moved a little. While Andrew Judkin waited impatiently, a voice came up from the darkness.

"Who are ye?—an' 'ow did 'ee get up there?" asked a man's voice.

"Never mind who I am," retorted Andrew Judkin, angrily. "Do you suppose I'm going to bawl out my name, and my family history, for your benefit, at this time of night? Bring up the light—and I'll give you more money than you ever had in your life before, my friend."

Once more the murmur of voices, broken by a

little quick laugh; it sounded like the laugh or chuckle of an old man. Then, just as Andrew was thinking of calling out again, the light began to bob about below him, and to mount steadily upward. As it came nearer, the waiting man saw that it was held on high, by some person climbing steadily, and picking his steps as he came; nearer yet, and he saw the head and shoulders of a man of powerful build, with a loose handkerchief twisted round his throat.

When at last the man stood beside him, with a battered old carriage lamp held above his head, Andrew Judkin felt almost sorry he had called out at all; never before had he seen so villainous-looking a countenance. It was broken and battered, as though from many fights; the nose, in some conflict greater than that in which the other features had suffered, had been knocked all on one side; the jaw was ferocious and heavy; the eyes two mere squinting dots, hidden away in the scarred face.

For a moment or two, they looked at each other in silence; the man scowlingly striving to make out what Andrew Judkin was like, or what he was worth—and Andrew, for his part, a little afraid of this fellow, who had sprung out of the fog and the darkness to his aid.

"Wot be 'ee doin' up 'ere?" asked the man, holding the battered lamp nearer to the other as he spoke.

"The express stopped for a moment, and I got out—by—by mistake," replied Andrew Judkin. "What place is this?"

"Dornboro'," replied the man. "Thirty mile from Lunnon."

"Any chance of a train up—or down?" asked Andrew.

"Up or down's all the same," said the man, with a laugh. "There ain't nothink goes through, till eight o'clock i' the marnin'."

"That's bad. Is that a cart you have down there?" He pointed down toward the blackness of the road.

"Ay." The man glanced too, holding the lamp a little higher above his head.

"Can you drive me anywhere—anywhere where I can find a decent hotel? You shall be well paid, if it takes you out of your way."

"Any way's my way—if so be as there's money at the end on't," replied the man, with a grin. "You'd best come down; I'll go afore wi' a light, an' show 'ee the way. Mind 'ow ye come; it's a bit steep."

It was more than "a bit steep"; that was a mild way of putting it. But, guided by the lamp, Andrew Judkin slid and scrambled down the side of the embankment, until he touched level ground; and found himself standing beside a rough country cart, to which was attached a dilapidated-looking

pony, sending out two long streams of breath into the fog. Andrew Judkin saw something else too, and pointed to a figure in the cart.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"On'y my feyther," growled the man. "Move up, old 'un—an' make room for a gent."

The figure in the cart moved, and Andrew Judkin, assisted by the man with the lamp, got into the vehicle, and seated himself on a mere plank, which stretched from side to side of it. The other man adjusted the lamp in its place, at the side of the cart, and seated himself on the shafts. Just as he took the reins in hand, he looked round at his passenger.

"There ain't no partic'ler way as you'd like to go—is there?" he asked, with a grin which might have been meant to propitiate Andrew, or might have been merely vicious. "It's all the same to me an' the old 'un."

"I don't mind in the least," replied Andrew Judkin. "The nearer the better—that's all."

The man gave the reins a shake, and the pony started, at a sort of trot. After a moment or two, Andrew Judkin became aware that the old man beside him was edging nearer; a moment later, he heard a palsied quavering whisper in his ear.

"Fine lad—my son, noble sir. There [illegible] many in these parts like to 'im. On'y don't

'im; 'e's ragin' 'ell w'en 'e's crossed, or w'en 'e don't get all 'e thinks is doo."

This was pleasant hearing; Andrew Judkin found himself watching the brawny shoulders of the man who drove the pony, with a deeper interest even than before. And, once more, he cursed the time—the foolish dream which had brought him to this pass—his own helplessness. He would have given much to be back, at that moment, in his own snug dining-room, before the fire. And he would have burned that picture, with the dawning of another day.

The wretched lamp threw a feeble gleam on the roads, and on the hedges and trees. Once, they clattered through a village; and Andrew Judkin cried out to the driver, to know what place it was; received some wholly incomprehensible answer; and was silent again. The old man beside him burst once or twice into feeble snatches of song—songs that were of the weirdest and most melancholy description, especially when quavered forth by such ancient lips. At such times, the man who drove would look round, and curse his parent in the most horrible fashion imaginable, without taking the slightest notice of Andrew. Then, for a space, there would be silence again, save for the rattle of the pony's hoofs, and of the cart; until the song broke out again, with the inevitable cursing as a species of refrain.

And so a dreary hour went by. By that time the main road had been left behind, and they had turned into a narrower one; from that, into a mere lane, with deep ruts in it, which jolted the cart horribly, and threw Andrew and the old man indiscriminately together. At last the cart stopped, at the door of a building which seemed to be little else than a mere shed; and the younger man jumped down from the shafts.

"What place is this?" asked Andrew Judkin, looking about him fearfully.

"This is w'ere you're a goin' to git out," responded the driver, adjusting the ruinous harness, and keeping his face out of the light of the lamp. "Fact is, guv'nor—the pony do be gone dead lame" —he looked up at Andrew Judkin with a wicked leer on his face—"an' can't go a step further. An', as luck'd 'ave it, we comes slap on the place w'ere the old 'un an' me lives. Quite fort'nit—ain't it?"

Andrew Judkin got down from the cart, and faced the other man in the road. He was not easily daunted; and he saw in this man a mere ignorant yokel, probably intent on plunder. He had got himself into a tight place—but he would battle out of it.

"I bargained with you," he said, as calmly as he could—"to take me to the nearest town, where I could find a decent hotel. Don't think to play your tricks with me, my friend; I am a man of

power and position, well known in the city of London. Carry out your bargain, and you shall be well paid; attempt to extort anything from me that is not due, and you shall suffer for it."

The younger man came at him, with his shoulders held low, and his head thrust forward, and his powerful arms hanging at his sides. "Wot—you'll talk about wot you'll do—an' wot you won't do! 'Oo see yer come down off the railway; 'oo see yer drivin' 'ere to-night? Pay me well—would ye? You shall pay me a bigger price than you think. Git in there!"

He flung open the door of the wretched-looking building, before which they had stopped, with one kick of his foot, and pointed inside. Then, as Andrew Judkin hesitated, the man seized him by the shoulders, and thrust him through the doorway; following himself, a moment later, with the lamp from the cart. The old man was just behind him.

Andrew Judkin glanced round the place anxiously, while he backed away from the men; he had some desperate hope of finding a weapon, with which to defend himself. To do him justice, he was no coward; and he had no thought of giving up a sixpence, without a fight for it. He noticed that as the old man came into the place, he closed the door, and stood against it; the younger one passed the lamp to the elder, and moved very slowly

toward his victim, with his eyes fixed intently upon him.

"Now then—be you goin' to 'and over wot you've got about you—or bean't you?" asked the fellow. "I don't want to do ye a mischief—but I means to 'ave wot ye've got."

"Not a penny," replied Andrew. "I'm not the man to be cowed by you, or by any man; you don't know me, if you think that. Look to yourself!"

Andrew Judkin had glanced quickly behind him, while the man spoke; stooping hurriedly, he caught up from the ground a rough, heavy stick—a mere piece of firewood—and flourished it threateningly. The younger man laughed, and backed away from him for a moment; made a swift sideways movement, as Andrew advanced; and snatched up the short brass-bound whip with which he had driven the pony, and which he had carried into the place with him. It was a formidable weapon in the hands of a strong man, especially when, as now, it was reversed, with the lighter part grasped, and the butt used for striking. He dodged cleverly a blow which Andrew Judkin aimed at him; and, as the latter stumbled forward with the force thrown into the misdirected stroke, the countryman brought his weapon down, with all his force, on the head of Andrew. With a groan, Mr. Judkin plunged forward, and fell, and lay still.

The old man dropped on one knee, and held the

lamp above the prostrate figure. A little trickle of blood was oozing down through the hair of Andrew Judkin, and there seemed to be no sign of life about him. The old man raised a cry of terror.

"You was always 'asty," he wailed. "I knowed you'd bring yerself to the gallows wi' it, afore you'd done. 'E's dead as mutton; they'll be cryin' 'alf over the country for 'im—an'——"

"'Old yer noise, old 'un," replied the other man, in a whisper. "If 'e's dead—'e's dead; if 'e ain't, 'e's got a knock that'll take some o' the sauce out of 'im for a time. Curse ye—'old that light steady, can't ye?"

He rolled what was left of Andrew Judkin over, callously enough, and proceeded rapidly to go through the pockets—taking literally everything he could find. When this was done, a sudden idea seemed to occur to him; he sat back on his heels, rubbing his chin thoughtfully, and nodded at the figure stretched before him.

"If 'e bean't dead—'e'll die; that's sure. If he's found, there'll be a bother; ten to one, 'e'll remember the place 'e got out at—that is, if 'e ever speaks agen. They knows us about these parts, old 'un—an' they don't love us. Now, I'll tell 'ee what I'll do."

"Wot be goin' to do?" asked the old man, looking up eagerly.

"I be goin' to strip 'im; I be goin' to dress 'im

in them old rags I throwed off w'en I got these clo'es. Then, I be goin' to put 'im in the cart, an' take 'im ten mile or so—an' leave 'im in a ditch, or anyw'eres else as comes 'andy. Ten to one, 'e'll be dead by the mornin', an' they'll take 'im for a tramp, as like as not. At any rate, we must get 'im away from 'ere. 'E 'adn't so much on 'im as I thought; but there's rings, an' a watch."

"But wot'll yer do with 'is clo'es?" asked the old man. "Ye can't wear 'em."

"'Oo wants to wear 'em?" retorted the younger man. "We'll 'ide 'em—bury 'em—anythin'; in a week or two, if there ain't no fuss about 'im, we'll manage to sell 'em, or get rid of 'em some'ow; there's lots o' ways."

Very rapidly and expeditiously, the two men, between them, stripped Andrew Judkin of everything he had on, and dressed him in the wretched rags of which they had spoken—tattered, threadbare, weather-stained garments, which scarcely held together. To make the illusion complete, they thrust an old cap on his wounded head; and then stopped in their work, to look at him.

"Lord—I wouldn't 'ave knowed 'im for the same man," ejaculated the younger, with a grim laugh. "Now, you stay 'ere fer a minute, w'ile I 'as a look round outside. I don't reckon on seein' nobody, this time o' night; but it's well to be careful. Give us the *light*."

Having assured himself that the coast was clear, and that the poor broken-down pony was still standing outside in the lane, the man came back, leaving the door open, and lifted the unconscious man easily in his arms. Carrying him out, he dropped him in a heap in the cart, and threw over him some old sacks. Then, the two men got on either side of the cart; the pony's head was turned in the direction from which they had come; and Andrew Judkin was carried on another stage of the journey he was destined to make.

At the edge of a little wood, behind a gate, they flung him down, and left him. They made their way back, by a circuitous route, to their dwelling, and obliterated all traces of what they had done; wrangled a little over the spoil; and finally settled down, in the wretched place, to sleep. For rogues must sleep, as well as honest men; and they probably sleep with lighter consciences, or with no consciences at all, despite what the world and moralists may say.

Meanwhile, Andrew Judkin, though sorely wounded, and in a pitiable condition, was not dead. He came to something of consciousness, long after daybreak; and his first feelings were those of cold and pain. As he sat up behind the gate, his head swaying and nodding unsteadily, and feeling a great deal too large for his body, he glanced down at the rags which covered him, and at his broken boots.

But the curious thing was, that he did not regard his extraordinary dress with anything of surprise; it was mere instinct which made him draw the wretched garments more closely about him, to keep out the cold. True, he had a dim idea that something had happened—something very strange, and very terrible; he felt, rather than knew, that a great change had taken place in him, in some indefinable fashion. But, beyond that, he remembered nothing.

The sound of something rushing and rumbling along—something that had rumbled and rushed along through his life, in some far-off time; the memory of a voice that had called to him—also in a far-off time—and bidden him do something; that was all he knew. Also, that he had to get to some place (although what that place was, he could not remember) was a dim remembrance with him.

He came out from behind the gate, and stood in the road—a swaying, staggering figure, blinking at the faint winter sunlight. Again he glanced down at the rags he wore—and again with no real feeling of surprise—only with a fretful idea that they were insufficient against the cold. He knew, too, that he was hungry; that was a mere animal instinct; it was instinct, too, which made him thrust his hands into the pockets of the clothes. And he knew, in a dim way, that something was decidedly wrong, *when he found* them empty.

Without knowing anything of what he did, or why he did it, he started off, at as great a rate as he could manage, up the road in which he stood; the strongest feeling in his mind, apart from the mere craving for food, was that remembrance of some place he had to reach—of something he had to do. He felt weak, and ill, and broken; but all that did not daunt him, nor stop him.

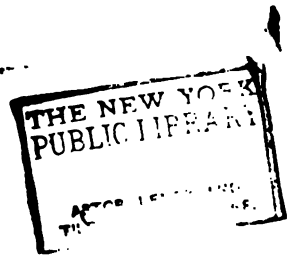
He must have gone quite a long way before he fainted, and fell, in a tattered heap, upon the road. When he regained consciousness, he was sitting on a bench, outside the door of an alehouse, with some rustics gathered about him. They asked him, with rough kindness, who he was, and where he was going.

The questions puzzled him; they seemed to have no meaning for him. Who was he? He found himself striving hard to remember that—trying desperately to remember something—was it a name? something that voice had called him—over and over again. But it was no use; he shook his head, and smiled at them—and said he didn't know.

They looked at one another incredulously; and one man tapped his forehead, and nodded significantly. They asked him again where he was going.

That question, for some reason or other, seemed more vital than the other; he wrung his hands, in sorrow at his inability to answer it, even to himself. He seemed to know that there was some place

The man of no name.


THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

he must reach—some work he must do. But he could only shake his head, in despair, and murmur again that he didn't know.

"'E doan't sound like a man o' these parts," said one man to a neighbour. "Got quite the Lunnon talk, 'e 'ave."

Andrew Judkin started up from his seat, and faced the man eagerly. "What place was that you spoke of?" he asked. "Say it again; I seem to know it. Say it again."

"I said I thought as 'ow you come fro' Lunnon," replied the man.

"Yes—yes—you're right. I remember that name—a long way off—years ago. But I think you're right; I think that's the place I want. Tell me—how do I reach it?"

They assured him pityingly that it was more than forty miles away; but that he was on the road to it then; they pointed out the direction he should take. Without waiting a moment, he thrust them aside with his eager hands, and went staggering out of their midst, straight on, muttering to himself as he went. At the last moment, one man—younger and quicker than the others—ran after him, and thrust a few pence into his hands; Andrew Judkin stared at the man, and at the coins, stupidly; then thanked him, and went on his way, clutching them fast as he went.

Twice only, in all that long day, he stopped at [redacted]

villages, and asked for food, and paid the little that was demanded. At nightfall, he came into the streets of London—a wretched, foot-sore creature, shunned by every decent man or woman he brushed against in the streets—and stood shivering, and looking about him, and wondering what he was to do.

And that was how the great and rich Andrew Judkin—lost—half dead with cold and hunger and fatigue—and with no memory left of anything that had gone before—came back to London town.

CHAPTER III

Certain Strolling Vagrants

THE drama was in a bad way at Great Kendlebury. Indeed, it might be said, with some truth, that everything and every one happened to be in the same plight at that exceedingly dull little town in Essex. For it was a good little town, and a pious; and the drama, like other ungodly things which came from outside, was looked at askance. Great Kendlebury had no room for it.

How or why, or for what particular reason, Kendlebury had ever had that imposing adjective tacked on to it, would be difficult to say; for there was nothing really great about it. It was a gray, straggling little town, which seemed, in some extraordinary fashion, to catch every blizzard and every melancholy fog which blew up from the Essex marshes, and to have grown sullen and resentful under an adverse Fate. Once or twice in its history, something ridiculously designated a Fair had drifted toward it; and had stopped, in a half-hearted way, outside the town itself, as though brought to a standstill by the dreary aspect of the place, and afraid to venture any further. At such

times, stolid yokels drifted out to the Fair, and looked at it, and drifted back again; they never seemed to buy anything, or to enjoy it, or to talk about it; only a species of dim wonder seemed to fill their minds, as to how it got there, and why it came. And, as a part of that Fair, there generally drifted to Great Kendlebury a poor tattered rag of a thing, much weather-beaten and very woe-begone, called the Drama.

In this particular instance, the drama was represented by a small booth, with a wooden gallery running along in front of it, and a short flight of steps leading from the ground to the gallery. The booth itself was half of wood and half of canvas —a mere flimsy thing which could be taken down in an hour or so, and packed upon a cart. It was gaily painted outside (or had once been gaily painted—for most of the paint had been worn and washed away in many weathers) with representations of the terrific combats which were popularly supposed to go on inside; and with a picture of a damsel in blue raiment, with a child in her arms, stepping lightly over a series of lozenge-shaped spots on a pink background, and with four enormous creatures, within an inch or two of her, evidently intended to represent dogs. In regard to this latter work of art, there was a tradition, among the people connected with the booth, that, at some time or other in its brighter history, a performance

of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had been given, with real dogs; but no man knew when it had happened, or where, or what had become of the dogs. The wildest stories were afloat, but no member of the company dared to scoff at them; those rumours and stories were the most precious remembrance they had.

On this particular night, within three days of Christmas, business at the booth was at a low ebb. A few melancholy yokels wandered about the Fair, and gazed open-mouthed at the front of the booth, and at the pictures displayed upon it; but they made no attempt to go inside, despite the frantic and despairing invitation of a gentleman in a hat much too large for him, with a feather dangling all over one eye, who breathed into (rather than blew) a battered old trumpet from time to time, and painted glowing imaginary pictures of the wonders to be seen within. Failing to move his audience in any way, he became at last sarcastic; told them pretty roundly exactly what he thought of them, and of their mothers; and of their ancestors generally, and of their town in particular; and retired within the booth in dudgeon.

Just within the door of the booth, behind a little wooden shelf, was seated a little old faded man, with a cheerful face, and something of a merry eye; he shook his head whimsically at the man in the feathered hat.

"You lose your temper so very easily, Tolderoy," he said, gently, rearranging a little pile of worn tickets on the shelf before him. "If they won't come in—they won't; it isn't kind to hurt their feelings."

"It eases the mind," said the other man, with a sigh. "If I didn't let out at 'em sometimes, in wot you might call a bit of gentle sarcasm, I should go down an' 'it 'em—or drag 'em in by main force. Are yer goin' to ring up, guv'nor?"

The little faded man stretched out his hand, and gently pulled back a curtain which shrouded the interior of the booth. "There's one boy, with a baby," he said. "He came in twenty minutes ago; and, I rather fancy, under the impression that we were something else."

"Never mind his impressions," said the man with the feather, scornfully—"we've got 'is tuppence. I'm not sure as 'ow you oughtn't to 'ave charged fer the baby."

"It's a large baby, certainly," said the little man—"almost as big as the boy." He had been glancing through the curtains, something with the air of a man who has got a rare prize, and wonders what he is to do with it. "I'm afraid, Tolderoy, he'll have to have his money back."

"No," said Mr. Tolderoy, sternly. "I've bin yellin' me 'ed off, this ever so long—an' the boy's *bin inside, out* of the snow—to say nuthink of the

baby. 'E's 'ad 'is two pennorth. I should turn 'im out."

The little man smiled, and shook his head. "We can't do that, Tolderoy," he said—"and we can't ring up to an audience of one. I suppose there's no chance of any one else coming?"

"There's no one else to come," said Mr. Tolderoy, looking out into the night. "The snow's thicker than ever, and there ain't a soul in sight."

"Well—twopence won't make much difference, one way or the other, Tolderoy," said the little man, with a sigh, as he drew that sum from his pocket. "I'm afraid this is the last of it—the end of 'Judkin's Company of Celebrated London Stars.'"

"Don't say that, guv'nor," exclaimed Mr. Tolderoy, in a hushed voice.

The little man called to the boy, and handed him back his money; cautioned him to be careful about the baby, and to mind how he went down the steps. Mr. Tolderoy looked after the boy resentfully, as though he contemplated following him, and committing a little highway robbery on his own account; finally shrugged his shoulders, and came back into the booth. The little man, by that time, had come from behind the shelf, and had been joined by a large and buxom lady, in a rustling silk dress of daring design (which looked much better, by the way, at a distance)—by a tall youth in a

flaxen wig, and of somewhat shapeless features—and by a plump little girl of fifteen or sixteen, looking very like a prettier copy of the buxom lady, and who played everything, from virtuous heroines to the one fairy in a fifteen-minutes pantomime. They all stepped into the interior of the booth, for the sake of extra warmth, and half-expectantly seated themselves on the ends of benches, close together, and looked at the little faded man. Mr. Tolderoy, who seemed to know what was coming, cocked one eye down the battered interior of the trumpet, as though he expected to find something cheering in its depths.

"We—we won't open to-night, ladies and gentlemen," said the little man, nervously. "The fact is—we are not—not patronized to—to that extent we should be—and I have been compelled——"

Mr. Tolderoy removed his gaze from the trumpet, and looked up reproachfully. "W'y don't yer git it over, guv'nor?" he asked. "W'y don't yer say that this 'ere is the frostiest town of all frosty ones we ever struck? W'y don't yer say that they won't 'ave us at no price—'cept by accident, w'en a kid takes us fer the waxworks, or summink equally indelicate—an' brings a relative in on 'is face? W'y don't yer say as 'ow the awjence got lonely, an' retired with the takin's? You're too mild, guv'nor; you want *me* to say summink neat an' proper about this town."

"I'm afraid that wouldn't do much good, Tolderoy," said the little man, quietly. "And you haven't let me tell you the worst yet, by any means. It isn't bad luck to-night only; it's bad luck all through."

A sort of silence had fallen upon them; they glanced at each other, and glanced at the man who spoke. Perhaps, in a fashion, they had expected this, and had known what was coming, for a long time past; perhaps, like all of their class who live from hand to mouth, and strive to subsist on the goodwill of the public, they had thrust away the thought of the evil day so near at hand—had tried to believe that it wouldn't come. Mr. Tolderoy looked round the booth, with a melancholy air—the air of a man who is silently taking leave of an old and familiar friend; the buxom lady furtively wiped her eyes with a very diminutive handkerchief, with which she was wont, on occasion, before delighted audiences, to captivate the youth in the flaxen wig.

"We've had a very hard struggle, for a long time," went on the little man—"and I've wondered sometimes how we've managed to live at all. We're out of date, somehow—and the public don't want us any longer."

The buxom lady tossed her head scornfully. "I'm sure I don't know what they *do* want," she exclaimed. "Sophie an' me have given 'em the real

legitimate for years—'ave rammed it down their throats, so to speak——"

"P'raps you've rammed it a bit too 'ard," said Mr. Tolderoy, in a low voice. "I've warned yer against overdoin' it, Mrs. Giddings."

Mrs. Giddings flashed round upon him. There was an old and standing feud between them—a feud, be it said, which had only to do with their poor profession, and was not in any way connected with themselves, in a private capacity.

"P'raps, Mr. Tolderoy," she said, bitingly, "me an' Sophie might be in a better position to-day, if I'd consented to be less the artist, and more what some people I might name always are——"

"Mrs. Giddings—Mrs. Giddings—pray calm yourself!" exclaimed the little man, feebly.

"—And though I may, in my time, have doubled a good many parts, Mr. Tolderoy, and played to audiences that don't know what actin' is, I would have you know, sir, that I am, and always shall be, a actress; that I don't show meself as a lure an' a bait outside, Mr. Tolderoy——"

"It wouldn't be no good," retorted Mr. Tolderoy, with a grin.

"Nor do I blow a trumpet, Mr. Tolderoy—nor crack doubtful jokes with the people outside." Mrs. Giddings, being quite exhausted, tossed her head again, and glared at him defiantly.

"Mrs. Giddings," began Tolderoy, in a melan-

choly tone, and somewhat reproachfully—"I 'ave my livin' to earn—an' it's 'ard that a fellow artist —(for such you are, Mrs. Giddings; 'ave I not 'eld you in these arms, as often as three times in one evening—an' 'ave I not stabbed you, in the most familiar fashion, oft and oft?)—I say, Mrs. Giddings, it's 'ard that a fellow artist should shove me trumpet in me teeth, so to speak. To joke, Mrs. Giddings, is not me nature; but I must live. I 'ad planted in me, Mrs. Giddings, a poetic nature, and a disposition to rise; a cruel fate gave me a name like the chorus of a comic song, an' kep' me down. What would you 'ave, Mrs. Giddings—what would you 'ave?"

Mrs. Giddings was so overcome by this appeal to her more generous nature, that she started, appeared to catch her breath, and dashed the diminutive handkerchief across her eyes; a moment later, held out a large hand to Mr. Tolderoy, effusively.

"Tolderoy, old fellow—I beg your pardon," she exclaimed. "You are what nature has made you —an' you couldn't 'elp yourself. I take it all back."

Mr. Tolderoy gravely shook the outstretched hand, and the incident closed. Indeed, it was rounded off, to the satisfaction of every one, by a remark on the part of Miss Sophie Giddings, that "Ma's heart always did run away with her."

"Now that that is satisfactorily settled," said

the little man, beaming round upon them, and rubbing his hands—"let us get to business."

"Business let it be, by all means," said Mr. Tolderoy.

"We've been together a long time," said the little man, "and I never thought it would come to this. God knows, I didn't start like this; I had dreams and hopes of London, and star parts, and goodness knows what. And, after all the years of struggling, it has come down to my running a ghost-show at country fairs—not that I would wish to suggest that a ghost-show is not perfectly respectable, and proper, and right, ladies and gentlemen—but it isn't what I meant when I began. And now, at the last, I'm losing even that—I'm having stripped away from me the last thing by which I can earn a living. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, that one small boy with the baby, who came in to-night, is the very fag-end of all the audiences who have sat in this old place—the last of 'em."

"The last of them?" they echoed, in varying tones of surprise and consternation.

"Yes—the last. Old Bob Judkin is at the end of his tether—and the show is his no longer. We haven't many props, and the booth is an old one; but, a week or two back, when things were going very badly, I raised money on it. To cut a long story short, I haven't been able to pay it back, or to pay the interest; the show will be seized by

twelve o'clock to-morrow." He rose to his feet, and raised his arms tragically above his head. "It's all over; there's an end at last of the whole business."

Mr. Tolderoy was the first to break a painful silence; and he broke it with a long lugubrious whistle. "I 'adn't any idea things was as bad as that," he said. "I might 'ave knowed we couldn't keep on long, with the business we've been doin'; but I thought maybe you'd got a nest egg, stowed away somewheres——"

Bob Judkin shook his head. "I'm not the one for nest eggs," he said, with a little laugh. "No one ever knew Bob Judkin to save anything; no one ever knew him to have the chance to save anything. It's hard, coming just now; I had hoped we might have managed to tide over Christmas somehow." Then, a sudden thought occurring to him, he added hurriedly, "I don't want you to think the real ghost won't walk this week: that'll be all right. I've got enough for that. And you are all of you comparatively young; you'll drop in somewhere—and I'll look after myself. Now—I don't want to talk about it any more to-night; it's a bit of a wrench, after all these years, and it's knocked me down a bit. I shall be more ready to think about it in the morning. Good-night, one and all."

He passed from among them, and went out

through the curtained doorway into the night, leaving them sitting looking at each other. Outside, on that little wooden gallery, Bob Judkin stood for a few minutes, looking up at the stars. The snow had ceased, and lay crisp and untrodden at his feet. Curiously enough, while he stood there, despite the trouble which menaced him, and despite the fact that his last hope seemed to be gone, the man laughed softly to himself, while he looked up at the stars.

"It doesn't matter a bit for me—and it can't touch her," he whispered to himself. "She's out of this life—out of all the fret and worry and sordid care that has been my lot for so many years. She sings in the great world of London, and has her name in the papers; it can't touch her. Why should I fret about it—when she's safe?"

He came back into the booth, with a brightened face. It was empty—the two ladies having retired to change their dresses, and the two men performing that operation, as rapidly as possible, behind a sort of screen in a corner. In a few minutes the ladies emerged, and the four players came toward Bob Judkin, clad in very shabby outdoor apparel, and muffling themselves up as best they could.

"It's a fine night now," said Bob, cheerfully. "The snow has stopped, and the stars are out."

They had humble lodgings in the town, and set

out for them at once. Bob Judkin lingered behind, saying that he would lock up the booth, and see that all was right before leaving for the night. He watched them go, from the little wooden gallery before the booth; and then made his way back into it.

Standing there, alone among the empty benches, with only one smoking oil lamp to light the place, he thought how cheerless and deserted and melancholy the place looked; glancing back over the years for a moment, and thinking of that road he had trodden, which seemed always to lead a little lower, he had a momentary feeling, in his simple, honest soul, of raging impatience—a petulant, resentful thought that Fate might have been kinder to him. It was all over in a moment, and he smiled again, at that more happy recollection which had struck him when he looked up at the stars; then, going toward the small stage, he thrust aside the cloth which hung in front of it, and, diving under it, pulled out sundry old mats and rugs, and began to spread them upon the floor. He was busily engaged in this task, when the sound of a footstep on the bare boards of the booth aroused him; he dropped the rugs, and started up from his knees, and looked round. Mr. Tolderoy stood gazing at him gravely, shaking his head.

"I suspected this 'ere," said Mr. Tolderoy, reproachfully. "Come, Mr. Judkin, I put it to you,

you wouldn't call this doing the 'andsome—would you?"

Bob Judkin looked at him sheepishly, and tried to laugh. "Well, Tolderoy—I don't quite see what you mean," he began. "If it suits me to sleep in the old booth—if I like sleeping in the old booth——"

"Ah!" Mr. Tolderoy shook his head, and slowly and solemnly closed one eyelid. "*If* you likes sleepin' in the booth—well, Tolderoy ain't the boy to say nay. But it ain't 'andsome, that's what I say; it ain't a bit 'andsome."

Bob Judkin hung his head a little, and softly kicked a corner of one of the rugs into its place. "You see, Tolderoy, there are—there are reasons," he said, softly.

"I know," said Mr. Tolderoy, nodding his head sagely. "An' w'ile you're a payin' out the money to a great 'ulking chap like me, you sleep on bare boards, an' in this draughty 'ole of a place. 'Pon me word!" exclaimed Mr. Tolderoy, with much fierceness, "I've a mind to set about yer!"

"No—don't do that," said Bob, looking up at him, and smiling. "If you're not in a hurry, Tolderoy, sit down, and pull your coat round you (it is a little draughty here, as you say), and light your pipe, and talk to me. I—I'm quite glad you came back again, Tolderoy."

"'Ow long 'as this 'ere bin a goin' on?" inquired

Mr. Tolderoy, sternly. "'Ow long 'ave you bin picnickin' in this 'ere way, w'ile lazy louts like me 'ave bin between blankets? 'Pon me word," cried Mr. Tolderoy, more fiercely than ever, "I don't know when I've 'ad sich a mind to set about anybody, as I 'ave to-night!"

He strode about fiercely for a moment or two —even putting up his fists once or twice, and hitting out heavily at the air, to relieve his feelings. Calming himself presently, he consented to sit down on one of the benches, and to pull out his pipe and light it. Bob Judkin sat down on his improvised bed, and looked up at him, half whimsically, half entreatingly.

"You think I've played you false in this, Tolderoy, I know," began Bob; "but I did it for the best. I couldn't afford to take a lodging, and this place isn't so bad, if one sleeps in one's overcoat."

"That ain't the point," retorted Mr. Tolderoy. "It ain't as if you'd bin used to it; it ain't as if you'd 'ad to sleep w'ere you could, or 'get a meal 'ow you could. Leave that to folks like me, Mr. Judkin: it suits me. I'm 'ard, I am—an' I don't take kindly to luxury. It don't need no tellin' for any one to know that you was born a tip-topper; many a time, when I've bin playin' the 'eavy father of a night, I've thought as 'ow some 'eavy father must 'ave given you the push, years ago, an' done you out of wot ought to 'ave bin yours."

"It wasn't exactly like that, Tolderoy," said Bob, after a little pause. "I was wild, I suppose —and thoughtless. I wanted to see the world; and so I ran away from the best father a boy ever had, and became a play-actor. And this is the end of it, Tolderoy—the poor, sorry end of it."

"Now—don't you give way, Mr. Judkin," said Tolderoy, soothingly. "'Aving come from up aloft, so to speak, ain't it possible for yer to go back again? Ain't it possible for yer to go 'ome to that 'eavy father, an' fall on 'is neck—and—an' all that kind of thing?" Mr. Tolderoy waved his hand vaguely, and looked inquiringly at the dejected Bob.

"No; he's in his grave, years ago; I've a brother, living somewhere in London—and I believe he's rolling in riches."

"Find 'im—fall on *'is* neck," suggested Mr. Tolderoy, promptly.

"No—that wouldn't do," said Bob. "I've appealed to him once—years ago. He simply told me he wanted nothing to do with me—told me pretty roundly what he thought of my vagabond life, and advised me to stick to it; I never tried again. But there"—Bob Judkin got up, and smiled, and stretched his arms above his head—"it might be worse; it might be a great deal worse. There's the little girl in London, doing great things, and getting her name in the papers—that's something —isn't it, Tolderoy?"

"It's a good many years since the little gel used to go round with us—ain't it, guv'nor?" said Tolderoy, musingly. "I mind the time when she went on with Mr. Giddings, as the Coiner's Child, an' on'y 'ad to look pretty. Mighty well she done it, too?"

"Yes—she always looked pretty, Tolderoy—and she was always fitted for something better than this," said Bob, softly. "Don't think, Tolderoy," he added, hurriedly, "don't think that I want to hurt your feelings; but she wasn't fit for this life—was she?"

"Ah—that was your 'igh notions did that," said Mr. Tolderoy, reprovingly. "You always thought as 'ow she was fit to drive in 'er kerridge—didn't yer? Seems to me," added Mr. Tolderoy, puffing at his pipe with a grave and judicial air, "seems to me that that gel of yours ought to 'ave belonged to the other side of the family—the rich side."

"Yes—yes—you're quite right, Tolderoy," exclaimed Bob Judkin, eagerly. "She was never fitted for poverty or hardship; a delicate little fairy like that ought to have been surrounded with every luxury that the heart of a woman could wish for."

"She wouldn't 'ave bin more delikit, or more sweet, or better in any way, if she'd been worth millions," said Mr. Tolderoy, stoutly.

"Thank you, Tolderoy; would you mind shaking hands?" said Bob, gratefully. "It's my opinion,

Tolderoy," he added, "that you'd grace the best star turn it would be possible to put you in. You'd adorn it, sir—that's what you'd do."

"I might 'ave done—in me prime," said Mr. Tolderoy modestly, smoothing his scanty hair. "But that time 'as long gone past; I'm on'y fit to blow into a trumpet, or bang a drum, or choke the life out of Sophie Giddings three times a night, in the character of the villain. No, sir—the time for soarin' is past. There *is* a party," he went on, in a melancholy tone, "as could 'ave pulled me up, an' made me do things: but she won't look at me."

"Indeed? Who is that?" asked Bob Judkin.

"Mrs. Giddings. I 'ave a passion for that female, Mr. Judkin, that blinds me to 'er faults an' 'er figger. I 'ave tried to live it down—but it can't be done; it 'urts me to 'ave to stab that woman! I find meself bein' unduly gentle with 'er, in the great stranglin' scene. I force meself to be 'arsh with 'er in private—merely to 'ide me feelings."

"I am sorry to hear this, Tolderoy," said Bob Judkin, looking at his friend in much concern. "But you must hope for the best, Tolderoy—the sun may shine, alike on your prospects and on your love."

"It ain't likely, Mr. Judkin," replied Tolderoy, gloomily; "it ain't at all likely. My sun has gone down. In three more days, Christmas will be 'ere —an' I am supposed to be full of mirth. If I'm

full of anything, Mr. Judkin, in the present state of my finances, I shall be surprised."

Mr. Tolderoy rose to his feet, put his pipe in his pocket, and buttoned up his coat. Bob Judkin, now that concealment was no longer necessary, began to shake out his poor apology for a bed, and to make preparation for turning in for the night. Mr. Tolderoy watched him sadly, and finally turned toward the door.

"Good-night, guv'nor," he said. "I shall always 'ave a belief that, one of these days, somethin' good'll come along fer you. I'm past it: but you're just the sort of man as'll drop into a bit of luck, one of these days, and do the grand. An' if ever sich a fortune does come along, I 'ope——"

There was a sudden noise outside, and a loud knocking at the door of the booth. Then, before Tolderoy or Bob Judkin could speak or move, the door was thrust open, and a little group of people burst into the dimly lighted place. Bob Judkin caught his breath, and cried out, as he saw the foremost figure.

It was the figure of a girl. Quite a young girl, who ran to him, with arms outstretched, and sobbed and laughed, and hugged him, smothering him with the snow which clung to her garments, all in a moment; she seemed to cry out, so far as he could understand in that whirling moment, how glad she was to see him, and what wonderful news she had

to tell. Looking past her, Bob Judkin saw a tall man, whose face he thought he remembered—a man of a peculiarly grim and silent aspect. Close behind this man was Mrs. Giddings, with a shawl over her head, and Sophie; near them, the youth of no particular features.

In utter bewilderment, Bob Judkin sank down on one of the wooden benches, and looked from the girl who clung to him to the little group before him. That something strange and wonderful had happened, he knew; but what it was, he could not guess. The girl sat close beside him, and held her arms about his neck, and sobbed and laughed out disjointed fragments of the story she had come to tell.

"We have come by road—all the way from London, father—to tell you of the big fortune that is yours. We have not waited for anything—we have driven through the night and the snow—because I wanted you to hear it at once—from my lips, father—before any one else could tell you. Father—don't you understand?—don't you know what it means?"

He looked at her in perplexity, and smiled, and slowly nodded. "You—you've so taken my breath away, little Eva—with your talk of fortunes, and midnight journeys. Is that Mr. Ouseley there?" He pointed toward the figure of the tall man, who had come in with her, and who now stepped for-

ward, making a ghastly attempt, as he did so, to twist his thin lips into something that should suggest a smile.

"Yes, father; Mr. Ouseley came to me with the news, and has been good enough to bring me down here. I wanted you to hear everything about it at once; I wanted——"

Giles Ouseley stepped forward a little more, and held up one thin hand. Despite the urgency of his journey, and the lateness of the hour, he appeared in no way upset or excited; for any change in him, he might have been standing, as we saw him once before, beside Andrew Judkin in the firelight, looking at a certain picture of a child.

"One moment, Miss Judkin, I beg," he broke in. "Excellent as your intention is, I doubt if Mr. Judkin can get any clear idea of what we have come to tell, unless I explain matters myself, in a clear fashion. It can be done in a few words, Mr. Judkin," he went on, turning to Bob; "I have but to supplement what Miss Judkin has told you. You are the fortunate possessor of a large fortune, which is yours from this hour."

"A large fortune!" muttered Bob, staring vacantly before him. "Mine from this hour! Go on, Mr. Ouseley."

"You have seen me more than once, Mr. Judkin," went on Ouseley, watching him narrowly, "and I have gradually learned something of who

you are, and your history. I have also been fortunate enough to meet Miss Judkin "—he bent his long body stiffly toward the girl—"in London. You were under the impression that our meeting was a purely accidental one, and that I was interested in the curious life you led. Frankly, I had a motive."

Bob Judkin was looking at him curiously, and seemed, for some reason, to have drawn the girl more closely to his side. He nodded, in token that Ouseley should proceed.

"You had a brother, Mr. Judkin—a brother Andrew. For many years I have been the confidential servant of that brother."

"I see—I see," said Bob, looking at the man fixedly. "You spied on me for him—eh?"

"You are wrong, Mr. Judkin; your brother knew nothing about it. My position with him would have been in jeopardy, if he had known that I was acquainted with you. No—I had another reason; I was interested in you, and—if I may say so—in your charming daughter."

"But why do you come to-night?" asked Bob. "What has happened?"

"Your brother is dead, Mr. Judkin. Last night, he set off for the north of England; the train in which he travelled, by a disastrous mistake on the part of a signalman, went over an embankment into a river. In the darkness of the winter night,

the carriages were washed away, and nearly every soul drowned. Your brother's travelling bag and rugs have been found; his body is missing; he is not among the survivors."

"Poor fellow!" whispered Bob softly, after a little pause. "We were boys together; it's a long time ago—but we were boys together."

"Your brother never married, and therefore the whole of his property comes to you, as his next-of-kin. There must, of course, be certain formalities to go through; but the property is yours, and is a large one; and you may draw on me for any amount you like. I was in your brother's confidence, and I know that he has not disposed of his property in any other way. This is the good news I was bringing to you; this is the good news I took to Miss Judkin to-night, and which, at her request, I have brought to you with her."

The hard cold exact voice ceased, and Bob Judkin, after a moment or two, seemed to grasp all that this meant to him. With a little cry, he covered his face with his hands, and seemed to shake a little from sheer emotion.

"After so many years, little Eva—so many weary years! I wish—I wish your mother could have lived to see this night, my dear," he whispered, brokenly; "she had a hard struggle for it. It doesn't seem quite fair that all the struggling should be over now, and the sun begin to shine,

when she can't see the radiance of it. But there --I'm a poor sort of fellow, to be whimpering about it now, when I think of all it means to you."

The beginning of the journey.

He started to his feet, and clapped his hands, and looked round upon them all with a smile.

"There isn't one of you," he said, "not one of

you, that has stuck to Bob Judkin when he was poor and in difficulties, that sha'n't be rewarded. No—not rewarded; what a brute I am to talk like that! You shall share with me this good fortune; I'll set you up in a show of your own—the best upon the road—I'll—— O God!—I don't know what I'll do!"

"Easy on, guv'nor—easy on!" exclaimed Mr. Tolderoy. "I suppose there ain't no doubt, mister," he added, turning to Ouseley—"I suppose there ain't no doubt that this 'ere brother *is* dead —eh?"

"Not the slightest doubt about it," replied Ouseley. "My late master, Andrew Judkin, is as dead as a man well can be."

At about that same hour, while he said the words, a certain forlorn and shivering man, strangely in the likeness of Andrew Judkin, stood upon the inhospitable streets of London, and looked about him, and hugged his rags together to keep out the cold, and wondered where he should sleep, or how get a meal.

CHAPTER IV

The Song of Mrs. Bleak

HEAVEN knows how desperately that forlorn and shivering wretch, in the likeness of Andrew Judkin, strove to remember. That was the pitiful part of it all; that he stood in a new city, among new men and women, with a new life stretching before him—a life of which he knew nothing. Had he any definite sense of the misfortune which had swept down upon him, he might have hammered out for himself some road which should lead to remembrance; but if he had been tossed from another planet, he could scarcely have been in a stranger world.

Only gradually, words and things appealed to him, and woke an answering thought in his mind. The name of London had stirred him to the knowledge that he must get back to it—that he had something to do there—some work which had been long neglected. Having reached it, he was in a place familiar, yet unfamiliar; he knew that these were streets, and that these figures, hurrying through the snowy night, were men and women like himself; but he knew nothing more than that.

Strangely, too, in that dim and blurred thing, his mind, was growing up a curious passionate pity, for something or some one about whom he had heard—some one who had died—some one who had been struck out of life, as it were, in a moment. And, through it all, and above it all, was that sense, in the broken man, of something he had to do—some call he had to answer.

The mere instinct of a man who has lived all his life in cities guided him now; the memory which had been knocked out of him had not left him a mere savage, without the instincts of civilization. He knew where food was to be got, and how it was to be got; he knew that he must not sleep in the streets, because that was against the mandate of a certain grim thing called the Law. All that former life he had so suddenly dropped out of was as a dream, to which, in this waking hour, he was slowly and tediously groping his way; at present, it was like another life, set far back in the ages, and as dimly remembered.

He sat down upon a doorstep, in a quiet by-street, to rest and to think. Once, a very long time ago, he had been in a room, before a fire; when was that? Some one had stood in that room, and talked with him; who was that? He beat his poor maimed head with his hands, in desperate sorrow that he could not remember that.

Then, a figure floated before him, or before his

misty brain—a figure that changed, dwindling one moment, and increasing the next, so that he was never sure of it. Now, it was the figure of a man, always in that same dimly remembered room—always in the light of the fire. Now, the man was gone; and some smaller figure was in his place. And that smaller figure floated before him, through fog or heavy air, and said something, or strove to say something, which he could not understand. Curiously, too, that figure was associated in his mind with something that had to be done—that strange work to which he was mysteriously called.

He dropped his hands from his face, and shivered, and looked out upon the dreary street with haggard eyes. As he did so, there seemed to float, between him and the dark houses on the other side of the street, that figure that had been with him in some far-off time, in the room, and in the firelight. At first, it was a mere shape against the snow—growing larger and fuller, and then fading away again to nothing. Andrew Judkin sat still, with clasped hands, watching it—almost weeping, in his excitement and anxiety, lest it should fade away altogether, and take that one shred of hope from him.

In all that afterward happened, and in all that strange dream through which he passed, it is hard to say whether that Spirit of himself in earlier years really stood beside him, and guided him, and

led him on the road he was to travel; or whether that struggling, fitful memory of his painted before his vision the dream which had affected him so strongly, on that last night of his old life, and which must have struck deeply into all that was best in him, and that had slumbered so long. Suffice it that it was a very real and very strong presence with him, and that he clung to it, with the certainty that it would guide him aright, and show him, in God's own good time, how best he might repair the ignorant blunders of the past.

He saw it now—saw before him, in the quiet street, that figure of the child, who had seemed to step out of the picture, and stand beside him. He had no knowledge then of what it was, or what it represented; he did not associate it with anything that belonged to the life he had forgotten. No; he only knew, tremblingly and fearfully, that this was something belonging to that painful time through which he had passed, and springing out of it.

The figure grew stronger and clearer every minute; the face of it—that childish face, so familiar to him, and yet so strange—was filled with a curious look, half of pity, half of triumph.

"You have fallen very low," said the Child, regarding him steadily. "In all this great city tonight is there any man poorer than yourself—

weaker than yourself—more friendless or broken than you?"

Andrew Judkin looked down at his tattered dress, and his gaping shoes, and shook his head. "I don't understand," he whispered, humbly—"but I've fallen very low indeed. Who was I?—Where was I?—I can't remember."

"You'll remember in good time," said the Child. "This is but the beginning; I do not know where it will end. I have a part to play, as you have; the end is hidden from me. The road lies before you; come with me!"

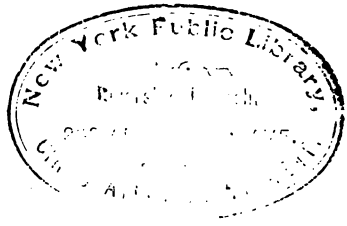
"I am faint and weary—I am hungry," pleaded Andrew Judkin. "I am alone in this great city."

"There are others in the same plight who deserved their sorrows less than you," retorted the Child, sternly. "Once, in the time you have forgotten, you raised your feeble, foolish voice against those things which God Himself had declared to be right and true and beautiful. Come—and learn God's lesson."

Trembling and shaking, Andrew Judkin rose painfully to his feet, and limped after the Child. It was very late, and the streets were deserted, save for some houseless wanderer like himself, who looked upon him covertly, and shrank away. Once, a woman flitted past him, like a shadow, through the street; and some old instinct of the man made him shrink from her, as from something unclean.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.



"You are poorer than I am."

The Child stopped, in a moment, and Andrew Judkin stopped too.

"She is poorer than you—more desolate than any man can be, at any time. She has all a great city arrayed against her; she is an outcast—a leper; yet she is a woman. Follow her—help her."

Not daring to disobey, Andrew Judkin limped after the woman, calling to her eagerly. She stopped, and looked back at him, and then ran on again; stopped, and came slowly toward him. It was evident that she did not see the figure of the Child. Andrew Judkin felt in his pockets, and found the last of the coppers which had been given him by the countryman that morning; went toward her, and thrust them into her hands. She looked at him strangely and wildly, and drew a hand across her forehead, to brush back a straggling wisp of hair; looked at him more closely, and then at the coins in her hand. He noticed then, and remembered long afterward, how thin the hand was, and how the night wind, sweeping round her, tore at her scanty dress, and showed the wasted figure beneath it.

"What's this for?" she asked, in a hoarse voice. "Why—you're a beggar yourself!"

He scarcely knew what he answered; he remembered only what the Child had said, and repeated that. "You are poorer than I am—and you are a woman," he said.

She shuddered, and looked at him quickly; perhaps she had a thought in her mind that he was mocking her. She came nearer to him, and, with a woman's tenderness, turned up the collar of his coat, and drew it closely round his neck; then thrust the money into his hand.

"You are an old man; you can't spare this. The Devil looks after such as me." She was gone, before he had had time to stop her, and the Child was at his side again.

"A man said once that he did not believe that the poor were good to the poor; do you remember that?" asked the Child.

"I—I think so; I don't know," faltered Andrew Judkin, still looking in the direction the woman had gone. "Who was it? Won't you lift this load from off me, and let me know who I am, and why I am here?"

The Child shook its head. "The time for that has not yet come," he said. "You have so much to learn—and the time is so short."

The time was so short! Andrew Judkin did not understand what he meant, but the words sent a chill through him. He looked round quickly, to ask a question; he stood alone. In his dread at losing that figure—that one shadowy thing he clung to, with the faint hope that by its aid memory might come to him, and he might get back to *something* he had lost—he limped hurriedly in this

direction and in that, striving to find it; peered into doorways and round corners, in the hope that it might be near at hand. Finding, at last, that he was indeed alone, he set off hopelessly to find some place of shelter—some roof, however poor, to shield him from the night.

In a vile street, somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Docks, he came upon a dimly lighted doorway, in the shelter of which a man was crouching. He stopped to glance within, and the man, turning a woebegone face toward him, spoke.

"Lookin' fer a doss?" asked the man, watching him furtively.

Andrew Judkin, without replying to the question, or understanding it, came toward the doorway. "I want somewhere to sleep," he said, without looking at the other man.

"Well—that's wot I said," retorted the man. "They'll take yer in 'ere fer tuppence."

Andrew Judkin put his hand into his pocket, and drew out all the money he had. In an instant, while he held it under the gas lamp, the starving waif clutched at it—had it in his lean fingers—and made a dash for the roadway. Again that old instinct swept over Andrew Judkin; before the man had taken two steps, Andrew had him by the arm, and was clinging to him. In his deadly fear lest he should be robbed of those few coins, he struck at the poor wretch, and kicked and pulled at him,

and strove to get the money from him. So desperate was he, that at last, with a cry, the creature released the coins, and shook himself free, and vanished.

Elated with his success, and tremblingly triumphant, Andrew Judkin, holding the money securely, thrust open an inner door with his shoulder, and passed into the place. The warm reek of many human beings floated to his nostrils; he heard heavy breathing, and an occasional gurgling cry, as some lost creature tumbled and moaned in his dreams; and the faint indescribable stir of many men. He paid his money—all he had, as it happened—and passed into the house. It was a shelter; and a rough bed upon the floor, in a sort of shallow box, was pointed out to him. There, he lay down, and tried to sleep.

Weary as he was, however, sleep would not come to him. Over the edge of the shallow box in which he lay, he could see, far down the dimly lit room, rows upon rows of other shallow boxes, each with a sleeping man in it. Peering just over the edge, each slumbering form appeared, as he looked along the lines, like strange, uncouth waves in a dark sea. The waves were troubled here and there, where a sleeper heaved himself, restless; but, for the most part, they were horribly quiet. Once or twice, a man would fling up a black arm, and cry out something—seldom a blasphemy; for

men go nearer to God in their sleep. Andrew Judkin, lying awake, began to wonder dimly in how many other such dim rooms in London that night, just such another dark sea lay silent, troubled only here and there by one poor restless wave.

The horror of the thing began to get upon his nerves. He had a frightful thought that these men were dead—an appalling waking dream that, with the coming of another day, they would rise up grimly from those shallow graves, and confront him. He almost shrieked aloud, as he thought that might be possible. In terror, he stumbled out of his bed, and huddled on the few garments he had taken off, and made for the street. Some one at the door attempted to stop him; with a cunning born of his late experiences, he dodged the man cleverly, and darted out into the street; he never stopped running limpingly along, until he had put quite a great distance between himself and the house.

He began then to think of the starving wretch who had tried to rob him, and whom he had beaten off so savagely. With the memory of that strange shadowy Child upon him, he began to fear that he had slipped back, in some way—had fallen from grace. He wished he could find the man again, if only as some wretched companion in his misery.

And then, quite suddenly, he saw the figure of

the Child, going on before him. He staggered forward, calling to it to stop—praying and promising Heaven knows what, if it would but hear him, and wait, and guide him. Once, he almost seemed to grasp it, and cried out with joy; it was gone fifty yards in front of him, almost while he seemed to touch it. It fluttered on before him, down a side street, and into a wretched alley; seemed to stop at an open doorway, and to beckon to him. Then, as he limped painfully forward, it went up the stairway, into the pitchy darkness, and was gone. Still crying to it—still weeping and pleading, and muttering incoherent promises, he stumbled up the stairway after it.

He reached the very top of the stairs; he remembered afterward that a pale moon shone through a grimy window, and lighted the bare boards of the narrow landing. His foot struck against something lying at one side of this landing—something that stumbled to its feet, and drew horrible rags about it, and aimed a blow at him, and went tumbling down the stairs in the darkness. In fear and horror, he turned to the first door he saw; beat upon it feebly with his hands; and fell in a heap on its threshold.

After a moment or two, the door was opened slowly, and the figure of a bent old woman stood just inside, holding a candle in one shaking hand. The wretched man at her feet, glancing past her,

saw fire and warmth; scrambled to his feet, and darted into the room. The woman closed the door, and came slowly and doubtfully toward him, peering at him out of dim eyes.

"For the love of God—don't turn me out," he panted. "Don't send me into the desolate, dreadful streets again; I shall die, if I'm left there."

"Lor'—you fair took me bref away, you did," said the woman, in a low voice, looking down at him where he crouched by the fire. "Me eyes ain't wot they was, by a lot, an' I couldn't make out at fust wot you was. W'ere do you come from?"

She was still looking at him in a half-frightened fashion; he noticed that she spoke in a low voice, and glanced, from time to time, toward a corner of the room, as though fearful of disturbing some one.

"I don't know where I came from; it was a long way from here, I think," said Andrew Judkin. "I—I was frightened; all this great pitiless city seemed set against me—seemed to mock my hunger and my misery. I don't know why I came here" —he looked about him, as though half expecting to see that shadowy figure of the Child again —"something led me here. What's that over there?"

He pointed nervously toward the corner of the room to which the woman's eyes had been so often

directed. She set down the candle on a small bare table, in the middle of the room, and went softly across, and moved a coverlet on what seemed to be a tiny bed upon the floor; smiled softly, and nodded; and held up a warning finger.

"'Ssh! Don't speak so loud," whispered the old woman. "'Tain't nothin' as'll 'urt you; it's on'y my baby."

"Your baby!" he replied incredulously, looking at her bent and aged figure.

"Ah—not mine; but dearer to me than any of mine 'ave ever bin," she said, replacing the coverlet, and shuffling across the room toward him. "Child of a dear dead gel of mine—an' the on'y thing in the world fer me to work an' strive for. But, bless me—'ere am I a gabblin' on, like a young gel of sixteen, an' forgettin' all about a poor, 'ungry creature like yerself. You did say you was 'ungry —didn't you?"

"I've had nothing but a little bread, for a long time; I can't remember how long—I can't remember anything. I've lost something—I've lost myself."

She did not understand; only one thing appealed to her, and that was the hunger of this poor homeless wretch, that the world had tossed at her feet. If a certain Andrew Judkin could have remembered then, he might have bowed his head, in shame and sorrow, in the ashes of her poor hearth, to see her

hurrying cheerfully about to get a meal for him. She had never seen him before, so far as she knew; he might have been the vilest thing under heaven, with blood upon his wicked hands—but he was hungry; that was all she cared.

"I was jest a thinkin' of gittin' a bit of supper for meself, w'en I 'eard you at the door," she said, as she threw some poor scraps of meat into a pan, and set them on the fire, "but I don't seem to feel to want it now. It do lie that 'eavy on the chest at night, you wouldn't think. I can't think 'ow I come to buy it at all; but it was lucky, wasn't it? An' w'en you've 'ad to live sparin' like, you gits to know the way to git things cheap; gits 'em for a ole song, as the sayin' is, if yer likes to wait till arter nine, w'en yer betters is served, an' you can 'ave the oddments wot's left."

She served the poor meal up rapidly and dexterously, and put the remains of a scanty loaf upon the table with it. Without thought of his benefactress in the least, and remembering only his own desperate need, Andrew Judkin ate all there was. And, while he ate, the old woman, watching him happily, hummed the refrain of some old song softly to herself.

Curiously enough, Andrew Judkin seemed to know that song—seemed to have heard it somewhere, in some far-off dream. He found himself listening eagerly for it—trying to piece together

every note of it, even while he swallowed his meal ravenously. Only when he had finished eating (for the simple reason that there was nothing left to eat) did he remember the woman, and remember that she, too, might be hungry. And, as he thought of that, the figure of the Child seemed suddenly to stand in the room.

"I—I'm afraid—afraid I've eaten all your supper," he said, glancing uneasily at the Child. "I was so hungry, that I didn't—didn't think of it."

"Lor'—don't you mind me," she responded cheerfully. "It ain't much as I wants—an' you was pritty nigh famished, from the look of you. I ain't 'ad much luck in me life—an' I'm afraid to drive away any that might be comin' to me."

"What luck could I bring you?" asked Andrew Judkin, wonderingly.

"You never know. I 'ave a feelin' that if I'd turned you out into the cold to-night, or drove you away, it might 'ave bin bad for me—or for my baby. Besides," she went on, more softly, "there's others that 'ave wandered the 'ard streets—may be wandering 'em now, for all I knows; an' they might creep to some poor door, as you came to mine, an' might be fed and warmed, because I had fed you. Oh, you never knows."

The Child still stood—not in the woman's vision, but in his—looking at him with accusing eyes. In

some dim way, he began to understand that this was but another part of the lesson he was learning; that in some blundering, ignorant past, this woman had come into his life, in some fashion he had forgotten. As she began industriously to clear the table, and to make the room neat, there broke upon his ear again the sound of the murmur of that tune he remembered.

He found himself, like a child in some shadowy game of hide-and-seek, getting nearer to what he desired—almost touching sane things for a moment—almost within grasp of what he strove so painfully to remember; yet finding it, the next moment, gone, and his mind a blank. Once, he had almost a clear thought that this woman had stood before him, a long time before, weeping and pleading; he did not know what it meant, but for one instant the thing was clear in his mind. Then, it was gone again, and he saw her only as she was now.

The song, and his own groping thoughts, were interrupted by a knock at the door. Going hastily to it, the old woman pulled it open, and admitted a young stranger—a tall, grave-faced man, with the collar of a rough overcoat turned up about his ears, and a much-worn silk hat in his hand. He nodded quickly, and came into the room, and set down his hat upon the table.

"Well—and how are we to-night?" he asked.

rubbing his hands, and looking about him. "You smell quite warm in here. Who's your friend?"

"Well, sir—this 'ere is a poor man—a—a sort of friend of mine, sir"—this as an afterthought, to spare Andrew Judkin's feelings—"as came in to sit by me fire, an' take a bite with me. The baby is—seems about the same."

The young man walked across to the corner, where the little bed lay, and gently turned down the coverlet; put a professional ear down to the little labouring breast—going on his knees to do it; got up, and came back to where the old woman stood.

"Now, you know, Mrs. Bleak——"

(Mrs. Bleak! Again that strange feeling, in the troubled brain of Andrew Judkin, that he had heard that name, and knew it. He turned it over and over, and strove to remember how or where he had heard it—but in vain. Yet it seemed to fit in, easily enough, with that song that still was humming through his head.)

"This won't do at all. I told you, a long time ago, what the child needed—what was absolutely vital. You wouldn't see the little mite die—would you?"

Mrs. Bleak cried out, and covered her face with her hands. "No—no—God forbid!" she cried. "But you don't know, sir, all that the little one is to me. Look round this poor room, as I have

looked this long, long time, and think what it would be, with that gone from it; think what it would be, if——"

"If she went from it, forever," said the young doctor, in a hushed voice. "You can't expect to give her all she needs; it will only be for a little time, and you'll have her back, strong and well. Even with your energy, your poor earnings won't give her what she needs."

"I ain't got no earnings—poor or otherwise," murmured Mrs. Bleak, furtively wiping her eyes. "The gent I slaved for, year in an' year out, for as little as 'e'd give me, turned me away last night —an' if I don't get anyfink else to do——" Her voice trailed off, and she turned away her head.

"That's bad," said the doctor; "but it only emphasizes what I say—that the baby must be sent away. If you should change your mind, you know where to take her; you have my card; they'll admit you, day or night. How did you come to lose your work?"

Mrs. Bleak had sunk into a chair, and was sobbing unrestrainedly, at the thought of her wrongs. "Asked 'im fer a Chris'mas box, I did; thought it might come in 'andy, fer gittin' a few things fer the baby. Tol' me I was past work, 'e did, an' turned me off."

Bow your head, Andrew Judkin; hide your face from all men, that you could ever have brought

such tears to old eyes—that you could ever have snatched bread from the weak and helpless! Bow your head in the ashes of that poor hearth that has warmed you!

Andrew Judkin began, in some dim way, to understand that he was responsible for this sorrow. He did not remember yet who he was, or what had happened; he only knew that this woman wept, because of some past cruelty of his. He looked down at his rags, and wondered how it could have happened. The doctor had gone, and Andrew Judkin, raising his head, saw the old woman bowed over the table; and saw, behind her, the shadowy form of the Child, pointing to the little bed in the corner. It did not speak; it only looked at him, with those grave accusing eyes, and pointed sternly to the little bed. Obeying some instinct, Andrew Judkin rose slowly, and crept toward the door. As he did so, the old woman raised her head, and, entirely forgetful of him, moved toward the little bed, where the sick child had begun to move uneasily in its sleep, and kneeled beside it. Murmuring softly to the child, she began to sing again that song that Andrew Judkin had been striving to remember——

"To the bloo Alsashun Mount'ins,
Come a stranger in the Spring;
An' 'e lingered by them fount'ins
Jest to 'ear a maiden sing—"

With that poor quavering voice still in his ears, Andrew Judkin opened the door softly, and went out upon the dark stairs. His guide was gone; alone, he fumbled his way down into the streets, beginning to see, in all this, some purpose looming large and shadowy over him, and driving him upon some road of which he could not know the end.

CHAPTER V

The New King

WITH the clearing away of the last doubts from the mind of Bob Judkin, came a change, not only over the little faded man himself, but over those who had listened, in the dimly lighted booth, to the story of his good fortune. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Bob appeared to swell with pride and importance and delight; and, being a man who habitually wore his heart upon his sleeve, made no effort to conceal his feelings.

In the first place, when the great wonder of the thing was gone, he caught his daughter in his arms, and hugged her, and rapturously whispered of all he meant to do for her, in the better time that was before them. Next, he caught the solemn Ouseley by the hand, and shook it fifty times at least; backing away from this wondrous magician at intervals, to look at him; and then darting at him again, and shaking his hand once more. Meanwhile, Mr. Tolderoy, for his part, had not been idle; to the astonishment of every one, he suddenly took the buxom Mrs. Giddings round the waist, and

waltzed her neatly right up the long lane which led between the benches—turned her dexterously at the end, and brought her as neatly back again. All this, too, without moving a muscle of his sombre and melancholy countenance.

"I 'ope, Mrs. Giddings," he said, after completing this remarkable ceremony—"I 'ope as 'ow you won't take it in the light of a liberty. You might regard it, Mrs. Giddings, as a matter of purfessional exuberance."

"Certainly, Mr. Tolderoy," responded Mrs. Giddings, laughing, and patting her side, in an endeavour to get her breath back. "I'm sure anything is excusable, at such a time. An' I 'ope, Mr. Judkin," she added, turning to that gentleman, "that *you* won't take it in the light of a liberty—our coming in like this. But we met this good gentleman in the street"—she pointed to Ouseley as she spoke—"just as we was steppin' out to get a little something for supper. 'E asked Sophie if she could direct 'im to the fair-ground; said 'e wanted you. Then it all come out, an' we all come on together."

"I'm glad you did that," said Bob; and he immediately shook hands with her, by way of a change. "That was kind and thoughtful of you, Mrs. Giddings—very kind and thoughtful."

Ouseley had been fumbling in his pocket, and now produced a long narrow pocket-book, as du

and sombre-looking as himself. This he opened, while all eyes were turned upon him.

"I mentioned, Mr. Judkin, that you might draw upon me to any extent you liked," he began, "and you shall find me as good as my word. I am prepared to let you have what sum you like—say fifty, or a hundred pounds. I have taken the liberty of bringing money with me, because I feared, from what I knew of your circumstances, that it might be necessary. Shall we say—a hundred?"

Bob Judkin, like a man in a dream, held out his hand; took the notes which were offered him, and slowly counted them over, still like a man in a dream. There was an embarrassing silence, while he rustled the flimsy things in his fingers, and smiled, and nodded to himself. Mr. Tolderoy broke the silence, in appropriate fashion, and with a timely suggestion.

"Them as knows me best, knows that I am not given to larfing, or to mirth in general; yet I could find it easy to laugh to-night, when I thinks of 'ow I found the guv'nor—not 'alf an hour since—makin' up 'is bed in the old booth 'ere—'cause 'e was too 'ard up to git a lodgin'. And—seein' as 'ow it's begun to rain flimsies, it mightn't be a bad idea if 'e stood us a supper fust, an' put 'imself into the best bed at The George afterward. I am in that state of excitement" (he didn't look like it, in the least, for he had not moved a muscle; but it was

probably true)—"that I feels I shall be breakin' the winders of Great Kendlebury, to express my feelin's, an' p'raps breakin' a 'ead or two into the bargain. Supper will calm me, and draw the vice out of me; I ain't safe, in me present state—I ain't, indeed."

Therefore it was decided, lest Mr. Tolderoy should get himself into trouble, that a descent should be made upon that dull old hostelry, The George, and demands made upon its resources. Mr. Tolderoy, armed with certain of the bank-notes, set off hot foot to prepare for their coming; the others followed more leisurely.

As they came out under the clear night sky, and looked about them, what a different prospect it seemed, to two of them at least, from what it had appeared a little time before! Still the same snowy prospect—still the same cold wind, to ruffle their thin garments; yet not the same, by any means. For the snow had a thousand little points of light upon it, caught from the stars—seemed to wink and sparkle at them; and the wind blew softly, and whispered of hope, and troubles gone, and the sunshine of many coming days. Two of them—father and daughter—must have seen something of this; for they stopped, as by mutual consent, and looked about them. Ouseley, in going out, had paused for a moment, in a half-hesitating fashion, and had offered his arm to the girl; she had

turned, and clung to her father. The man looked at her, with that curious still face of his, for a moment, and then turned away, and went after the others.

"So many years, child, I've wandered about, in places like this," said Bob Judkin, with a sigh, looking up at the stars, "with no settled home—and always struggling. I came into the life, when I was quite young; I found your mother—the sweetest soul that ever blossomed in hardship—in the life; and she taught me to love it. There's been a dear freedom about it—a splendid, wandering, gipsy-like existence, that not all the poverty and hardship could spoil. I"—he passed his hand across his forehead, in a lost way, and smiled round at her—"I'm almost sorry to leave it all behind."

"But think, father—think of all you can do with this fortune. In the years that have gone by," went on the girl, softly, "there must have been so many, poor like yourself, who have willingly and cheerfully stretched out a hand to help you; who, in dark hours, have smiled upon you, and made the stormiest skies the better for their smiling. The time has come now, when you may do the same; when, to any poor creature who may claim your pity or your help, you can give freely, as they once gave to you. Here, under the stars, father, let us say that we will not turn away any beggar from our doors; that the gold this hard old man, who is

dead, hoarded up, shall be put to better uses, and shall bloom, like fairy gold, and carry blessings wherever it goes."

"See now," cried Bob, appealing, as it were, to the stars, "see now what a girl this is! She's been through trouble and toil and hardship herself—yet it hasn't spoiled her; she has lived in the glare of false lights, and has heard things which might have soiled a soul less pure; yet it hasn't smirched her. Why—you shall be my little treasurer; you shall hold the purse. No man nor woman shall go hungry, if we can help it; you shall spend, and spend royally. Come, little treasurer—let's go to supper!"

Surely, never in the history of The George had there been such a clatter and a bustle as on that night. Don't make any mistake about it; it was not done easily, by any means. For Mr. Tolderoy had had difficulties; had been twice hurled violently out of the doors of The George, as a raving impostor, before he could prevail upon those responsible for the outrage to believe that he was really—for the moment at least—a man of property. But a sanguinary conflict with an aggressive ostler, and some bitingly sarcastic remarks to the dull-witted landlord, had had a due effect; Mr. Tolderoy had been overwhelmed with apologies, and the aggressive ostler dismissed, in disgrace, to the dark regions from which he had sprung. Thus it happened that,

476028

by the time the rest of the party arrived, the dull old George was lit from cellar to garret; a dull old waiter had got into a dress-coat, much too large for him, and was blinkingly waking up in the dull old coffee-room; and a staring boy, with straws upon his coat, was being cuffed into some condition of intelligence by the landlord.

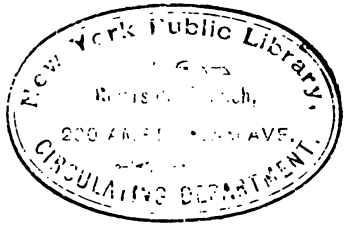
The George had never known such a time, or such guests. Strange dishes were ordered and consumed, and strange wines were got up from the depths of The George's cellars. In time, as the night wore on, the strange wines had a strange effect upon Mr. Tolderoy; in a most remarkable fashion, he insisted upon calling Mrs. Giddings by her Christian name, and publicly apologising for the many occasions on which, in the exercise of his calling, he had been compelled to maltreat her. Mrs. Giddings was so touched by the apologies, that she burst into tears, and called the astonished waiter to witness that she had always regarded Mr. Tolderoy as a gentleman and as an actor, and had looked upon any small matters of assault and battery from him as honours, and nothing less. Upon which, Miss Sophie Giddings appealed to the company generally to notice how completely her mother's heart was carrying her away; and every one felt satisfied and comfortable.

At the last moment, Bob Judkin felt that the occasion demanded a speech. Rising at his end of

The Drama is in a bad way.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.



the table—a gray-haired old figure, with kindly looks for all of them—he began.

"I don't know that I've much to say—to you, whose faces have smiled upon me, in good and in evil fortune alike—or to any one—except that I am very happy, and very grateful. I've played such a many parts, in my time, and played them pretty badly; but this part seems to suit me least of all. We shall see—we shall see; time only can show whether I fill the place my dead brother filled, for so long, better or worse than he filled it; let that rest. I won't say good-bye to you all, because it would hurt me to think that I was parting from you. God help us—we've heard the old drum beat, many and many a time, in many strange places, and under many skies—summer and winter alike; and it doesn't seem quite the thing, that I should be ringing down the curtain on it all, for the last time, and putting out the lights. I can't do it; I've tramped the roads so many years, side by side with you, that I can't turn off into the green fields now, as it were, and leave you to the road alone; it wouldn't be fair. So my little girl and I are only going away for a time—for a rest; please God, there'll be many and many a night, when we'll pay our money gladly, and walk up the old steps, to the old beat of the old drum, and see the old show. And, if things don't go well with any of you (and it's a hard life at times, as we all know), my little

girl and I will have open doors for all of you, and never a hint about going. I can't say any more; my heart's too full."

It was long past midnight before quiet was restored to The George; before lights were out, and Bob Judkin, in his dreams, was endeavouring to climb into impossible gilded coaches, the doors of which were far beyond his reach; the steps, too, which led to those doors, became, whenever he touched them with his feet, the mere wooden steps which had led up to the old booth, with a wooden hand-rail beside them. Waking at last from a troubled sleep, and finding himself in the big bed, in the best room of The George, he remembered what had happened, and fell comfortably asleep again until the morning.

The morning brought thoughts of change, and new excitements. Bob was anxious to be off to that London which had denied him admittance for so long; and Eva was eager to go with him, to help him take solid possession of the fortune which had come to him. Somewhat anxiously and nervously, Bob explained this feeling, as well as he could, to Mr. Ouseley, as the three of them sat at breakfast in the coffee-room.

"You see—my feeling is this," said Bob, glancing at his daughter for support. "It seems so wonderful to us, that, after all the hard times we

have had, there should be such a good time coming, that we don't want to lose a moment that can be helped. Now—is it possible that we may enter into possession, as it were, at once?"

"I think it might be managed," said Ouseley, with his eyes fixed on the table-cloth. "There is practically no difficulty; there is nothing to stop you, although, of course, certain formalities must be gone through, in proper order. But there is no one to dispute your claim."

"I wouldn't have it thought, for worlds, that I was in a hurry to step into my brother's place," went on Bob, hurriedly; "but he's dead, and all the sorrow in the world won't bring him back—even if I could feel any real sorrow for him. I like to think of him as he was when we were boys, before the eager rush for gold and power had hardened him; beyond that, I know really nothing of him. We had not met since he was beginning the world, and I was a mere boy; I should not have known him, in all probability, if we had met in the street. Perhaps—who knows?—such a life as I have led makes a man selfish," added Bob, pathetically; "but, at all events, I want to make the most of this good fortune, for the little girl's sake, as well as my own. And God knows I'll do well with it; I may scatter it a little—I'm built that way, I'm afraid—but I'll scatter it kindly."

"What I would propose is this," said Ouseley,

after a little pause, and glancing always at the girl, as though to see the effect of what he said upon her, "that you shall take possession at once —to-day, if you like. I have sufficient money, belonging to your late brother, to finance you for the time, until all arrangements are made. If you will so far honour me, Mr. Judkin, I shall be glad to act for you"—he glanced again at the girl, and lowered his eyes quickly—"without fee or reward."

"That's extremely kind of you," said Bob Judkin, gratefully. "I feel that I couldn't settle down, even for a day, any longer here; I'm like a boy at a new game; I want to begin with it at once."

"Very good," replied Ouseley, rising from the table. "With your permission, I'll get to London at once, and make arrangements for your reception at your brother's house. I have already given you the address; you can follow later in the day."

So it was settled; and, in less than an hour, Mr. Giles Ouseley was speeding away toward London on his errand. Lest it should be supposed that he was quite the disinterested character he appeared, let it be said at once that he had a certain scheme in his head, which he meant to mature, in the fulness of time; the man had seen, in this sudden sweeping away of one brother, and the placing of a weak, credulous old man in his place, a stroke of fortune for himself; the game was in his hands, and there was money in it. There was something

else, too, which touched even this frozen, bloodless creature; the thought of certain blue eyes, that had looked into his—the memory of a soft voice, which had thanked him gratefully.

"It was the strangest thing in the world, and the luckiest possible chance for me," he muttered to himself, "that made me first take an interest in Andrew Judkin's relations; I always thought something might come of it. Let me see; first, I hunted up this old idiot who ran the ghost-show, and made friends with him; then I found out from him about the girl, and took to visiting the hall where she sang, and got acquainted with her. The dead Andrew never knew that; but it has proved to be a very lucky thing for me. There's a fortune in this; and I hold one trump card, to be played at the last, if everything else fails. Mr. Robert Judkin—play-actor with a pretty daughter—I've got you, and I can do what I like with you!"

Meanwhile, that unsuspecting play-actor and his pretty daughter were making preparations to journey to London. It was an exciting business, to say the least of it; for Mr. Tolderoy (who, by the way, provided with finances, had entered into full possession of the show as proprietor) came, with the rest of the company, to see them off at the station; and Mr. Tolderoy, in particular, was anxious to make the most of the occasion. Indeed, it was with difficulty that he was prevented from bringing

either the drum or the trumpet, which he used nightly in his professional capacity, to grace the leave-taking. That difficulty removed, however, he constituted himself a living advertisement for his powers as an actor; insisting upon weeping upon the broad bosom of Mrs. Giddings, as the train steamed away, to the unbounded delight of curious onlookers at the station. But his regret at parting from Bob and the girl was genuine enough; and it was altogether a very quiet and subdued little band that turned away at last, and made its way to the booth.

Eva Judkin was very silent on the journey—at least, for some little time. Finally, with some hesitation, she turned to Bob, and slipped her arm through his, and began to tell him what was in her mind. They talked freely, for they were alone in the carriage.

"Father—I've had a secret from you, for a long time. Not exactly a secret, because I always meant to tell you, at some time or other; indeed, I would have told you at the first, but that the secret wasn't mine—at least, not altogether mine."

Bob looked round at her, in some concern, pushing back his hat from his gray head. "Nothing very dreadful, I hope?" he asked.

"Something absolutely terrible," she replied, hiding her face against his sleeve. "Something that will make you terribly angry; something that

will make you rise up, like the heavy fathers I've seen you play so often, and say dreadful things to me."

"My dear—you terrify me," faltered Bob, striving to catch a glimpse of her face. He had a shrewd suspicion that the rogue was laughing; she seemed to be shaking with it.

"One of these days—I—I'm going to be married," whispered the girl, very serious again in a moment at that tremendous thought.

"Well, my dear—I'm sure I hope so, with all my heart," said Bob, innocently. "Is that all?"

She started away from him, looking at him with wide eyes of indignation. "All?" she exclaimed. "Father—could anything be greater than that—could anything be more wonderful? When, with every hour of the day, the one thought in my mind is what he is doing, or what he is thinking; most of all, whether he is thinking of me. When no day is dark that brings him to me, even for a moment; and when the sun is hidden, and the world a dreary place, if I do not see him! And then you ask—'Is that all?'"

"I'm dreadfully sorry," began Bob, in tones of contrition. "I'm sure I never thought——"

"No—no—father; I understand," she cried quickly, nestling to his side again. "How should you know anything about it, when I hadn't told you. But I love him with every bit of love that

I can spare from you; even with a little that should belong to you by rights, I'm afraid," she added. "And he's dreadfully poor—and dreadfully proud —and dreadfully clever."

"Dear me," said Bob, smiling at her. "And how did this dreadfully poor and proud and clever young man—for I suppose he *is* young—eh?"

"Quite young," replied Eva, quickly. "Only three-and-twenty. And he's very handsome. Did I mention that he was very handsome?"

"No—I don't think you did," said Bob, after thinking over that point carefully for a moment. "That's another adjective to be added to him. Poor—proud—clever—handsome!" He ticked them off on his fingers, one after the other. "He must be a very remarkable young man, my dear."

"He is," replied Eva, with deep conviction.

"Ah! well—I'll take your word for it, little girl; I daresay you know so much better than any one else about those matters. What I was going to ask is this: How did this remarkable young man come to know you; how did he drift into your life?"

"I told you he was very poor," said Eva, speaking in a tone of deep seriousness. "Well—he plays in the orchestra at the hall where I've been singing. He's fit for better things than that," she went on, quickly, "but he's got his living to earn; some day he's going to be a great musician."

Bob was thoughtful for quite a long time. At

last, looking round nervously at the girl, he said what was in his mind—saying it more hesitatingly, perhaps, because of the clear eyes fixed upon his.

"You know, my love, you—you are now a woman of property; everything I have in the world belongs to you. In a word, my dear, you are worth possessing."

The girl bridled a little, and drew herself up. "And am I not worth possessing, under any circumstances?" she asked, quickly.

She was indeed—and Bob knew it. Looking at her then, his mind drifted back to the days when her mother's youthful beauty had first appealed to him; he remembered, with a sigh at the thought of it, that he had scarcely had enough in the world to buy the wedding-ring. Yet how happy they had been!

"Certainly, my dear," he said aloud; "but that is scarcely what I mean. Heaven knows, child, I wouldn't destroy your dream of love for the world; I'm the last man on earth who has the right to do that. Only it seems to me that you mustn't throw yourself away, as it were; and this poor, proud——"

"So poor, and so proud, father," she whispered, sadly, "that I'm half afraid he'll have nothing more to do with me when he knows that I am rich. That's what I've got to fight against," she added, "and you mustn't be surprised if I desert you altogether, father dear, and refuse to have anything to do with

you, or your riches. Here's London; we'll talk about all this some other time."

They drove to the house of Andrew Judkin, and were admitted by a smart servant-maid—a new importation that morning. They found Mr. Giles Ouseley in the big sombre dining-room, with a stack of papers before him, which he was anxiously studying. He welcomed them, in his chilly fashion, and began to explain what he had done.

"I have taken upon myself to send away the servants who were here under your late brother, Mr. Judkin," he began. "I thought you would prefer to start with a clean slate, as it were—if you will forgive the expression; servants are curious creatures, and they might have drawn comparisons —might have resented the fact of a new master coming to reign over them. I thought it well, lest you should be caused any annoyance, to send them all off, paying their wages fully, of course—and to replace them with others. You will find everything right, I think; I have even got a housekeeper for you."

"I suppose you know best," said Bob, a little uneasily; he never felt quite comfortable under the cold gaze of Giles Ouseley. "You'll find I'm the easiest fellow in the world to manage, and I sha'n't trouble much about details of that sort. I only want the servants, whoever they are, to understand one thing, and on that I insist. I'll have no beg-

gars turned away who come to me, until I have seen what they are like; I'll have no poor wastrel driven, with rough words or threats, from my doors. God knows," he added, pathetically, "my little girl and I have seen enough of hardship and misery to know what it means. I feel I hold this fortune of my brother's in trust, as it were—and I know that I must make the best use I can of it, if only in mere gratitude."

"You'd better not let your sentiments be known, Mr. Judkin," said Ouseley, with something of a sneer about his lips, "or you'll have your doors besieged, day and night."

"I don't mind that," said Bob, obstinately. "Only let the servants understand what I mean; on that point, at least, I'm firm as a rock. Now let us see our new fairy castle; take us through the house."

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to say that Mr. Ouseley had his own purpose in view, when he turned away the servants who had known Andrew Judkin for so many years. The man felt that he occupied a new position in the house, and that it rested with himself to make that position one of power; obviously, he did not want those about him who had been witnesses of the position in which he had stood, in regard to the late owner. He, too, wanted to start with a clean slate. At the present moment, he knew that everything was in his hands

—the management of Andrew Judkin's business—everything.

Giles Ouseley made himself very much at home there all that day; consented, with seeming reluctance, to lunch with them; and, despite the familiar position he seemed to occupy, was always carefully respectful—almost servile, in fact. Finally, pleading business, he went out, late in the afternoon—somewhat to their relief, it must be said. Directly he was gone, Eva ran out of the room, and returned, in a few minutes, dressed for walking, and buttoning her gloves with much determination. She did not look at her father as she came into the room, but fixed her eyes on those troublesome glove-buttons instead.

"I'm going out, father," she said, softly.

Bob stared at her, in some surprise.

"What new game is this?" he asked, with a smile.

"I'm going out on business," she replied, still intent upon the glove.

"Not to sing, my dear?" cried Bob, starting out of his chair. "That's not necessary now."

"No—not to sing; I shall never have to do that again, I hope," she said. "That isn't my business at all."

"What is it, then? I don't want to seem inquisitive, my dear—but I——"

"But you'd like to know—eh?" The glove was

done with, and she looked up at her father for the first time; came to him quickly, and put her hands on his shoulders, and her face very near his. "I'm

Eva is going out on business.

going to find the poor, proud, clever—what else did I call him?"

"Handsome, I think it was," replied Bob.

"Thank you; it *was* handsome." She laughed,

and rewarded him with a kiss. "Well—I'm going to find him, and tell him what I think of him."

"You won't be hard on him, my love?"

"I'm not quite sure," she replied, laughing. She ran out of the house, and looked about for a cab. It was quite a new sensation for her to ride in cabs, and a very delightful one. While she hesitated, a forlorn-looking man limped along the street, without glancing at her, and paused for a moment outside the house; she thought, as she looked at him pityingly, that he had a dazed, lost air, like that of a man newly awakened from sleep in a strange place.

Eva Judkin was so happy at that moment, and the world was so bright, that she thrust some silver into the man's hands, and hurried away. Looking back, when she had gone a few yards, she saw him, still in that dazed fashion, looking at the coins, as though he wondered what they were, or why they should have been given to him.

CHAPTER VI

Love—and a Waiter

IT happened that there was no cab in sight; and the girl went on rapidly, in the direction of her destination, looking about for one. The street was quiet—one of those great sombre streets in the West End, wherein there is never any life, save for an occasional carriage. As Eva Judkin fluttered along, happily enough, the tall figure of a man on the other side of the street turned swiftly in the same direction, and went after her; distanced her with rapid strides; crossed the road, and confronted her. It was Giles Ouseley.

Of all men, at that particular moment, this was the man she least desired to see. Truth to tell, she distrusted and disliked him; she had in her that indefinable feminine instinct which told her he was a rascal, and a menace to her. Yet, on the other hand, he had undoubtedly rendered her and her father a service; and mere gratitude for that alone urged her to speak kindly to him.

Ouseley's face was as expressionless as ever, when he stopped, and jerkingly raised his hat

very little way from his head; he seemed to perform the action as something which must be done, but to which he was unaccustomed.

"I have been waiting, Miss Judkin—a liberty on my part, I confess—to speak to you," he began, in the dull level voice which seemed to fit his appearance and his manner so completely. "I will walk with you."

"I—I'm very sorry, Mr. Ouseley," said Eva, in some trepidation, "but I am in a very great hurry just now; I—I am late for an appointment. I was just looking for a cab."

"I've no doubt we shall find a cab a little further on," said Ouseley, calmly. "I have some idea of what the appointment is you intend to keep; it is my desire to dissuade you from keeping it. I can not talk, if you insist upon walking at so great a rate."

"I shall walk just as fast as I please," retorted Eva, increasing her speed a little, "and I don't want to hear you talk at all. You have no right to know anything about what I am going to do; you have no right to wait about like this, to waylay me, and to spy upon me."

Eva Judkin had worked herself into quite a fever of excitement and indignation with the man; she stopped in the street, and faced him resolutely, while one little foot was going with ominous speed upon the pavement.

"I am happy in having called up such a pretty rage," said Ouseley, with a dry laugh. "You have more spirit than I gave you credit for—and you interest me more than ever." Then, as she was hurrying on again, he laid a hand on her arm, and detained her. His touch, light as it was, was so strong and masterful, that she stopped again, and looked at him half fearfully.

"If you have anything to say to me—say it in my father's house," she said, after a moment's pause.

"What I have to say can not be said in your father's house. For your sake—and for his—I ask you to listen to what I have to say calmly. Now, if you have fully made up your mind not to run away again, we can walk on, in a perfectly natural fashion, and talk with the calmness which is necessary."

They went on—side by side—quietly enough, to all outward appearance, though the girl was inwardly raging.

"You speak of your father's house," began Ouseley, not looking at her, but keeping his eyes fixed straight in front of him; "I would beg to remind you that I placed him in it. Oh, yes—I know what you would say—that he has the right to be there, as his brother's next-of-kin; suffice it that, for purposes of my own, I have gone out of my way to assist him to that position before it was legally

his. You are one of those purposes; and I may have others."

"I don't see what I have to do with it," replied Eva, faintly. Yet she did see, and with a sudden sinking of the heart.

"I said just now," went on the remorseless voice, "that I knew what appointment you were going to keep. You are going to meet young Maddison."

"Since you know so much about it—why ask me?" said Eva, with a burning face.

"When I first set about to find out something concerning your father," went on Ouseley, taking no notice of her question, "I little thought into what I was running; I little imagined that I—the grave man of business—would find myself haunting music-halls, and waiting, like some ridiculous boy, outside stage-doors."

Eva Judkin began to laugh—fairly rippled with laughter, as she walked on demurely beside him. He regarded her sternly for a moment or two; and the more sternly he looked at her, the more she laughed.

"I fail to see any reason for mirth," he said grimly, at last.

"No? Well—I'm afraid I do," she retorted merrily. "When I think of all the fun you gave us—and of how often we had to dodge you—and the false messages we sent out to you, to tell you

that I'd gone, or that I hadn't been there—I really can't help laughing. It's very rude, I know—but I——"

She broke off hurriedly, as she glanced at him, and saw the expression of his face; it frightened her. His voice, too, had changed, when he went on speaking again; it was harder and colder than ever; and he seemed almost to bite his words as they came out.

"Young Maddison—fiddler and dreamer—happens to have the trick of making love, I suppose—of saying soft things, such as please a foolish girl's fancy. I never learned to do that; I've had to devote my time to something more practical."

"Yes—so I should imagine," replied Eva, quietly.

"Since the word must be said, however, to express my meaning—let me say that I love you," said Ouseley, in the same expressionless voice; "that I feel you to be necessary to my life; that I am even prepared, should it be necessary, to make some sacrifices to gain you. Before you reply—and you have a habit, I fear, of replying giddily and foolishly to anything, without giving it proper thought—before you reply, let me warn you that I hold a power of which you know nothing; that I am in the habit of ruling men, and ruling them strongly—in the habit of having my own way. Should you treat me in the manner your tone seems to suggest, I

may exercise that power, and you may regret that you did not give the matter more careful thought."

There was a cab in sight at last, and she hailed it. As it drew up beside the pavement, she stood facing Giles Ouseley, and flashed out at him indignantly with what was in her mind.

"So—that's your way of making love, is it? It quite upsets you, Mr. Ouseley, to use the one word that is the best and the sweetest a woman may hear from a good man's lips; that dear word sticks in your throat. And you back your love with a threat of what you can do, to injure me, or to injure some one I love. If you'd have come to me, as any honest man might do, to tell me what was in your heart, I could have taken your hand as a friend, and told you what I felt, and been genuinely sorry for you. But I hate you—I despise you; you ought to be ashamed of yourself," she cried, on the verge of tears. "And I'm going now to find Mr. Maddison; and I'm going with the lightest heart in the world, because I love him. And if I knew that, in going to him, I was going to privation and want, and what the world calls misery, I'd still go with the lightest heart in the world; and I'd still say I hated and despised you, though you held out hands filled with gold to me. There!"

The wilful little beauty sprang into the cab, and gave a direction to the driver; Giles Ouseley, watching savagely from the pavement, saw her

drive away. That cabman, too, must have had some inkling of the state of the case, for the audacious fellow flaunted his whip at the discomfited lover on the pavement.

By the time Eva Judkin reached her destination, she was somewhat calmer, though her indignation still found vent in half-stifled little sobs, and in petulant exclamations under her breath. But the excitement of the coming meeting drove away all other thoughts; her mischievous mind was busy with schemes to puzzle and tease her lover.

The cab drew up at a little swing door in a side street, through which men and women were constantly hurrying. Eva Judkin sprang out of the cab, and darted in through this door, nodding quickly, as she passed, to a man seated in a sort of little box just inside. Evidently she knew the place well, for she dived into certain subterranean depths, out of which, in a few moments, she emerged with a young man—a young man in a most surprised and excited state. Without replying to any of his questions, she dragged him through the doorway, and into the cab; told the driver to drive westward; and then, as the vehicle moved away, turned eagerly to her companion.

It must be said at once that young Frank Maddison appeared quite to deserve the girl's recent passionate championship of him. Bright and keen and eager, the young man proclaimed himself to

the most casual glance as one who had looked on Life unflinchingly, and found it very good—a man whose ardour could not easily be damped, no matter how badly Fortune might treat him. At the moment, his dark eyes were all for the girl, and his clean-shaven boyish face bright and glowing with love for her.

"Now, Frank," she began, eagerly, "you have two hours before you need be back in that dreadful place again, and those two hours belong to me. And I want you to let me do just what I like with them."

"Certainly, my darling," replied Frank, laughing. "After what has happened already, you may do anything with me you please. I have been seized upon, in the most unceremonious fashion, and dragged about, and hugged and kissed in dark passages——"

"Well, sir—and didn't you like it?" asked Eva, pouting. "I'm sure you're most ungrateful—— Frank—you really mustn't! And in a cab, too!"

"I'm sorry—but you lured me on," he replied, with another laugh. "What I was going to say was this: that I had been so astonished and bewildered, that I really didn't know where I was, or what was happening. I have a dim sort of idea that I am recklessly driving about in a cab, with the most delightful little girl in all the world—and I——"

"And that ought to be quite enough for you, sir," broke in Eva. "As I have said, you have two hours to spend in that delightful girl's company, and you've got to make the most of it. I want to go and dine somewhere."

Poor Frank Maddison blushed hotly, and looked exceedingly uncomfortable. "Well, you see, Eva," he began, lamely, "you see—the truth of the matter is—that I haven't—haven't quite——"

"Haven't quite all the money you'd like to have, you dear old fellow, or you'd give me the best dinner in London, and the most expensive—eh?"

"Well—yes—that's something like it," he replied, slowly. "It's a shameful thing to have to admit; but I really am dreadfully hard up, Eva."

"But I suppose you'll have to dine somewhere yourself—won't you," pursued that most diplomatic girl. "Why not take me there? I'll promise not to eat much."

Frank shook his head resolutely. "Quite impossible," he said. "It—it's only a sort of pot-house—an old-fashioned place, with boxes—where the steaks are always tough—or the knives blunt —and the beef underdone—and flies in the vinegar. No—I couldn't possibly take you there."

"Frank," she said, with much determination, "I'm going to that place—if I have to go alone. Don't you see, you stupid fellow, that I want, for once in my life, to do exactly the same as you have

been doing for such a long time. I want to go to this place, where my dear boy has his poor solitary meal every night; I want to sit on the same seat with him—and eat the underdone beef—and see the flies in the vinegar—and everything. It'll be the most glorious fun."

"Well, of course—if you insist," said Frank, relenting a little. "Certainly, the place is most highly respectable—and, at this time of day, there won't be any one there but ourselves."

"Frank—that place was evidently made on purpose for us," she exclaimed, laughing. "Will you tell the driver where it is?"

"I think, if you don't mind, my love, we won't drive exactly up to the door," said Frank, hesitatingly. "They're not used to that sort of thing, and it might upset them; in fact, they'd probably give themselves airs, and charge a percentage on the cab-fare in the bill. But we can go to the end of the street."

So the cab was turned about, and they drove to the end of a small court, in the neighbourhood of the City. Before they got out, Eva pressed certain money into the reluctant hand of Frank Maddison.

"It's my cab—or rather—it's father's cab. Father has come into a big fortune, and so I'm doing the thing in style. I'll explain everything presently. Now for the tough steaks, and the other delightful things. Come along!"

In a most undignified fashion, they ran, hand in hand, up the court; and passed into the modest little refreshment-house with which Frank Maddison was familiar. It was a quaint little place—very much out of date—and divided off into queer little boxes, on either side of a sort of lane down the centre. In some far-off day it had probably done a roaring trade; but that day had long gone by. It may have been a fairly busy place at midday; but at six o'clock in the evening, and within a day or two of Christmas, it was left severely alone, and was contemplated—probably with some memory of its faded glories—by a rusty old waiter, who looked as though he had been shipwrecked, with that house, up that particular court, years before, and never rescued.

He must have had an idea that Frank and the girl had wandered in from outside (much in the same way that visitors to a strange city go into churches and museums) to see what the place was like, and were immediately going out again; certain it is that he made no attempt to go near them. There was even an air about him—verger-like—as of one who would presently describe the cruets and the sauce bottles, and name the age which gave them birth. But when those two misguided young people squeezed themselves into one of the boxes, and Eva began to take off her gloves, he woke to the startling fact that they meant to

have something to eat; shuffled down to them; and stood expectant, with a hand under his coat tails, and the other at his chin.

He may have had some idea—poor old wreck that he was, left stranded so far from the busy world—that he was in a species of dream, and that Youth and Beauty had come down, in imagination, to the gray old City, specially on his account; he must have seen precious little of either of them there, during the years that had powdered his head, and bent his back.

They discovered, of course, that most things were "off"; and what wasn't off, would take ten or twelve minutes to be "on." But the old fellow was evidently rather proud of the resources of the establishment, and had evidently made up his mind to tax those resources to the utmost. He recommended this—and he recommended that; was delicate in suggesting that young ladies were usually partial to a particular dish, which he discovered, on making inquiries into a dark cavern in the wall, could not by any possibility be had; and generally did his best. Moreover, there was a sense of proprietorship about him, and of pride in Frank, as a customer who had long been a mere single item, and was now behaving in a manner proper to a young man, and becoming to his age. He seemed, too, fully to approve of Eva—was so taken with her, *in fact, that* he found it necessary to back away

from the box, with his eyes on her to the last; thereby imperilling the plates and dishes which belonged to his master.

But he was an artful dog, too—that waiter; and, in some past age, must have been very young indeed, and have known a thing or two. For he recognised that this was a special occasion—and he dropped a dark hint, in the ear of Frank, that there was a certain bottle of claret, in certain dark regions below the pavement, on which he would like an opinion. He said it was the sort of wine one didn't get nowadays.

Perhaps it is as well that one doesn't get such wine now. For it was a wine which might have been good once, but which had been soured by long neglect. Perhaps, indeed, it had once been a member of a big family, all of which had gone where good wine goes; left in loneliness, it had grown bitter and revengeful, and waited its opportunity to work harm. But it did no harm to them; for they believed in it utterly, and looked at the light through it, and told each other how good it was, and how cheap, considering the quality! As for the waiter, he was positively remorseful about removing the cork; lingered over it apologetically. Evidently he thought that it was a wine to be proud of, and the day that saw it opened a day to be remembered.

"There you are, sir!" he exclaimed softly, as

he set down the uncorked bottle, "an' I think you'll find it meller. If I might say so—I think I'd let it cling in the mouth a little, before swallerin'; you'll find it a wine that wants nursin', so to speak. An' a 'appy Christmas to you an' the young lady, sir!"

He backed away with a flourish—even something of a swagger of his feeble old legs. Eva looked at him with that bright smile of hers, and then turned quickly to Frank.

"Isn't he a lovely old waiter?" she whispered.

"Splendid! And so sympathetic—isn't he?" added Frank.

She leaned forward a little more, and whispered more eagerly. "Frank—it's a large bottle; do you think it would matter if we asked him—the waiter, I mean—to have a glass? He wished us a happy Christmas; wouldn't it be a nice thing if we could think, afterward, when we had gone, that he said something—something sweet about us to himself—and wished us luck?"

"That's a capital idea, my darling," said Frank. "He doesn't look very strong; I hope it won't take him off his legs, or give him airs above his station. We shouldn't like to do the old fellow any harm—eh?" added Frank, laughing.

"It won't hurt him," whispered Eva. "It'll draw him out!"

"I expect it will," said Frank, softly. He beck-

oned to the old man, who shuffled forward quickly. "The lady wishes you to drink our healths; I think you had better bring a glass," he said.

That waiter positively blushed. It will not be believed—but he actually blushed. More than that, he staggered; it was evident that he felt that his wildest dreams, of an absolutely impossible glory, were realized. That he should be asked by Youth and Beauty to drink a glass of the wine of wines —the nectar that was hesitatingly mentioned to choice customers, and only then with bated breath! He hurried away, after that first moment of astonishment, and brought a glass.

Forty customers might have come in then, and clamoured for food; every cracked old bell, in the cracked old establishment, might have gone mad with ringing; he would have known nothing about it. He was in heaven; his faded old eyes watched the bottle tilted, and saw the wine of wines creep up the glass, till it came to the top. Then, as the two pairs of smiling eyes looked at him, he stepped forward—not hurriedly, or with any indecent eagerness—but with the air of a man who has reached the supreme moment of his life, and dallies with it—spins it out to the last second. With a sort of sweeping movement of his right arm, he advanced, and took the glass; holding it delicately, bent his gray old head toward the young girl, and bowed; turned stiffly round, as on a pivot, toward

Frank, and bowed again; raised the glass toward his lips. But not to drink; not for worlds. There was something else to be done first.

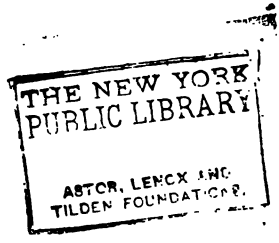
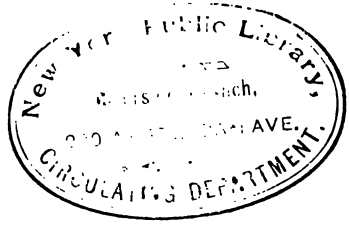
"Your servant, miss," he murmured. "I takes it kind and thoughtful of you, miss—an' you, sir—to ask me for to join you—'owever 'umbly—in this way. I looks upon it a'most as a homen, miss—I do, indeed. Before this, miss—it's bin 'alves of bitter with the young gent—p'raps I may make bold to say, in life, as in liquor. May it, miss"—he looked toward the girl again, and his watery old eye had a world of meaning in it—"may it be ruby wine—of the best, miss—in life *and* in liquor—while you smile upon 'im. Your servant agen, miss!"

He swallowed the wine, with deliberation and care, shook himself, and came up smiling. "They do say, sir," he added, "that even the King 'asn't sich a wine as that—can't get it, sir—for love nor money!"

"I should think it's quite probable," said Frank, gravely.

He hovered over them like some grotesque good fairy, that waiter. He was absolutely the most delicate-minded man it is possible to imagine; he turned his back discreetly, and was most busy with the fire, when Frank adjusted the girl's cloak; and he handled the bill in so dexterous a fashion, and accepted the mere money in payment for it as so

The waiter sees a homen.


THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

New York Public Library,
AVE.
CIRCULATING DEPARTMENT.

slight a thing, that it might have been a meal provided by him, with a wave of the hand, for which nothing could possibly be charged. Altogether a waiter who had lost his chances, and might have shone among the great.

But little Eva Judkin had not done with him, by any means. Perhaps she remembered that toast he had spoken when he drank the wine; perhaps she was grateful that day for a thousand things that had happened. Be that as it may, she went back, when they were almost at the door, and slipped half-a-crown into the old fellow's hand.

Solemnly dancing a jig.

"That's for a Christmas-box," she whispered. "Good luck to you!"

After he had shut them out into the wintry evening, they had the curiosity to peer back at him, through the dim glass of the door. He was solemnly dancing a sort of jig, all to himself, in the deserted coffee-house—keeping one foot firmly planted on the ground, and revolving slowly upon it, with a heel-and-toe movement of the other upon the floor, and with one arm extended above his

head. Laughing gaily, they went off, arm in arm, toward the big house of Andrew Judkin, in the dull aristocratic street.

As they went along, Eva told him all that wonderful story of the fortune which had come to them —spoke of all it meant to them, and of all the wonderful things she meant to do, now that the power to do them was hers. And, as she talked, glancing anxiously at him, she saw a change come over his face—saw what she dreaded. Coming within sight of the house, she stopped in the friendly darkness, and took him by the lapels of his coat, and looked up into his eyes. Looking down at her, he thought, with an ache in his breast, how precious she was to him, and what a dreary thing life would be when he lost her. For he felt that this was the end of it; that she was going out of his life.

"Oh—I know what you're thinking," she whispered, shaking him a little impatiently, "and you're doing me a great wrong. You think so badly of me, that you dream I might change—might grow to feel that the boy I loved, when I was poor, and worked for my living—the boy who guarded me, and helped me, and cheered me on, and steered me clear of dangers my heedless head would have carried me to—you think I could forget him, or let him drift away from me. Frank—dear old boy—you don't think that—do you?"

"No—God knows I don't think that," he said,

"I am going to make your fortune."

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

slowly. "I know you better than that; I know that you would never change, or turn from me, or forget all that we have said to each other—all that we have mapped out for the future. It's only the future that has changed; you are rich now—while I——"

She put her hand lightly on his lips.

"You—you are the best fellow in the world—and I should simply hate you, if you were rich. Don't you worry about anything; I'm going to make your fortune; I'm going to make you famous. All those dreams you have told me of are coming true, Frank; and you're going to be the greatest man that ever lived, although *I* think you the greatest man that ever lived now. Good-bye; think of me always. Good-bye!"

She ran lightly down the dark street, and up the steps of the big house. And he lingered a long time, in the winter twilight, before he turned sadly away, back to his work.

CHAPTER VII

A Night under the Stars

BOB JUDKIN, in that great house, was like a child with a new toy—a new and wondrous toy, with fresh delights in it at every turn. He went through the place, a hundred times, from top to bottom; tried all the chairs, with as much relish as though he got a new sensation out of each one; punched the beds, and gloried in their softness. So many years had elapsed since he had tasted luxury—not since he had run away from home, as a matter of fact—that it was a strange and astonishing thing to find servants ready and eager to wait upon him. And the wonder of this new power so filled the simple mind of the man, that he had an overwhelming desire to do something in return for it—to help every poor and fallen creature who might come near him; and to do this, out of the sheer gratitude and joy which filled him.

"It's all true—it's all true!" he exclaimed, in an eager whisper to himself, as he went through the great house, touching the various costly things in it, as though to be sure that they were real.. "I had an idea that I might be dreaming—that I

should wake presently, to find myself back again in the old booth, lying on the floor, looking up at the stars through the rents in the roof, and wondering what the takings would be to-morrow. But that can never happen again; that's all done with."

His joy was softened presently by the memory of the brother he had not seen for so many years, who had died so tragically, and who had once lived in lonely splendour in this house. He sat down before the fire—in that very chair wherein Andrew Judkin had sat, not so very long before, and looked up at that picture of Andrew Judkin, as a child, over the fire-place; shook his head at it, whimsically and sadly.

"Ah—I have a dim recollection of what you looked like then, Andrew—though I was but little more than a baby. I loved you in those old days—looked up to you—and admired you. I wish to-night you could come back, from that dreadful river where you lie washing about, dead, and stand before me; we might undo some of the mistakes of the past—might clasp hands, as brothers again, and ask each other's pardon for all the bitter words we've said, or written to each other, and which would have been so much better left unsaid, or never written at all. Yes"—Bob Judkin got up restlessly from his chair, still glancing back at that picture—"I wish I could see you again."

He crossed over to one of the big windows of

the dining-room, which looked over the street. It was growing dark, and snow had begun to fall again —driving and whirling before a bitter wind that howled among the chimneys. Looking out into the dismal street, with that softened mood upon him, he saw a figure, seated upon the steps which led to the door, holding its head between its hands, and seemingly oblivious of wind and snow and the coming night. The wretched rags in which the figure was clad scarcely seemed sufficient to cover it, and Bob Judkin's heart gave a leap of pity, as his eyes fell upon it.

"Poor wretch!" he exclaimed. "To be without shelter, on such a day as this—to be cold and poorly clad!" He turned away, and hurried to the door. "It's a fine thing to be rich—a splendid thing," he muttered gratefully, as he hurried out.

Calling a servant who was passing through the hall, he told the man to bring in the poor fellow who was sitting on the steps outside. The man hesitated for a moment, as though doubtful what to do; understanding, however, from his master's tone, that he must obey, he opened the hall door, and went down the steps, and touched the vagrant on the shoulder. He was a new servant, who had come into the house, like all the rest, but a few hours before; and he was already beginning to wonder what sort of a queer situation he had found.

The vagrant looked up at the man, and slowly

got to his feet. He had been driven from so many cold resting-places, in all that weary day, that it seemed nothing new to be driven from another. When, however, the man told him that he was to come into the house, he seemed scarcely to understand what was meant. Presently, however, he grasped the servant's meaning, and limped slowly and dejectedly up the steps, and into the warm and comfortable house.

Bob Judkin was standing at the door of the dining-room, watching him pityingly. And, as he watched, he saw the forlorn stranger do an extraordinary thing. The man stopped, as the door was closed behind him, and looked about him with wide startled eyes; moved forward quickly, and touched an ornament on a bracket, which had stood there for years; looked about him again quickly, and seemed about to cry out. Then, as Bob came forward toward him, he stopped again, with that lost look on his face, and shook his head, and pressed his hands to his forehead.

"It's gone again—gone in a moment!" he muttered, huskily. "I thought I had it then—clearly and firmly in my mind; in another moment, I could have cried out a name that would have been—— No—I can't remember—I can't remember!"

"Why—you're quite an old man," said Bob, compassionately. "It's quite bad enough for a young man to be homeless and poor—but for you . . .

There—come inside; come and tell me how I can help you."

Andrew Judkin—for it was he—followed Bob slowly into the room. Had it been possible for any one who knew the story to be present then, at that strange meeting, it would have been a sight, indeed, to see the elder brother—once so proud and strong, in his power and his wealth, standing with bowed head, in rags and misery, in that home that had been his so short a time before; and to see, too, the man he had despised and cast off, watching him pityingly, and eager to help this broken unknown creature, who seemed to claim his charity.

Andrew Judkin looked round the room, in much the same dazed fashion in which he had looked round the hall; passed his hand across his forehead; and then looked at his brother. Dimly, in his poor troubled brain, memory was stirring; but he had no knowledge yet of who he was, or where he stood.

"Once—a long, long time ago—I seem to have known a place like this," he whispered, glancing round again, and then looking at Bob. "I don't know when—or where; something has left me—something has snapped—here"—he touched his wounded head, and sighed, and shuddered. "I can't remember — anything. Something — God knows what!—brought me to this street—to this house. I found myself coming here, as though I trod some

old way I remembered. And yet"—he looked down at his awful dress, and shook his head again, in that forlorn fashion—"and yet, it can't have been; it must have been the recollection of some uneasy dream—some dream I have forgotten."

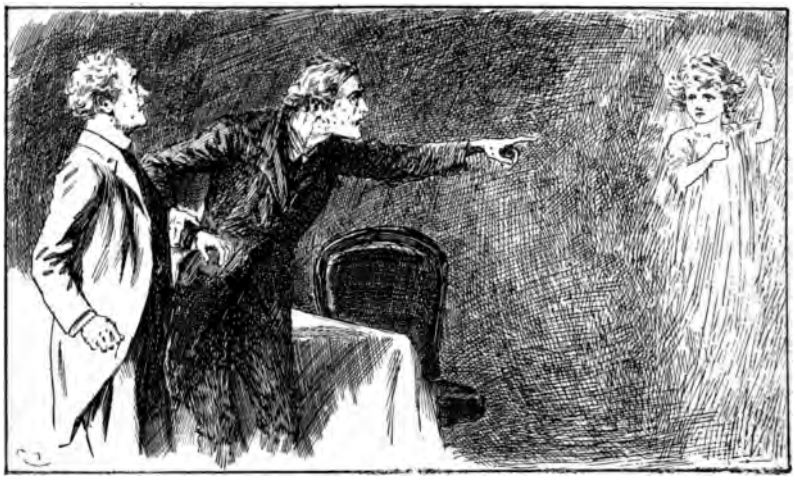
"I suppose it must," said Bob, slowly, a little puzzled by the man's words. "What has happened to you? Have you been ill?"

"Yes—very ill," whispered the other. "I don't know how it is—but I have lost something—fallen from something. I seem condemned to wander through dreadful places, and among strange people; I know no one—can find no one who knows me. Look—look quickly!"—he pointed, with a shaking hand, to the further end of the room, and laid the other hand eagerly on his brother's arm. "Don't you see, there—there!—the Child—pointing at you!"

The room was deep in shadow; but for that, the wanderer might have raised his head, and seen that picture above the fireplace. As it was, he saw only that strange living image of it—the Child who had been with him, since he had been so curiously swept out of life. There it stood, with the grave child-like face turned toward him, and with one hand pointing to the unconscious Bob.

"I—I don't see anything," said Bob, a little nervously. "You are ill—weak for want of food. There is no one here but ourselves—no one at all."

Again, with that lost gesture, Andrew Judkin passed his hand over his forehead, and shook his head. "It seems to be there," he said, slowly. "But so many things seem to be, that are not; per-



"Don't you see, there—there!"

haps that's a dream—like all the rest. Are you sure it does not stand there—— Oh! God—don't you see those accusing eyes, that seem to burn into my soul?—are you sure there's nothing there?"

"Nothing at all," said Bob, stoutly.

"It's very strange; it seems to be there. Hush—let me speak low, lest it should hear, and be offended. It has followed me, night and day, for a long time; it's leading me somewhere—I don't know where; I can feel it drawing me on, to something I must do—some work I have to finish. Speak low;

I drove it from me once, and wandered, like a lost creature, until I found it again. It brought me here—to-day. And I thought—I had a wild idea I knew this place. Who are you?" he asked, abruptly.

"Oh—never mind my name; suffice it that I live here—with my daughter," said Bob.

"Your—your daughter. Is she young—and pretty—with soft eyes that smile—eyes that are sorry for one, and yet glad at the same moment? Is she all that?"

The gratified Bob nodded eagerly. "Yes, yes—she's all that," he cried. "Have you seen her?"

"I saw her come from this place; she stopped, and said a gentle word to me—and gave me money. I wonder why?"

"Well—I suppose she was sorry for you—wanted to help you," said Bob. "Bless her soft heart—she's full of joy to-day; all the clouds have drifted away from the sun; she's rich and happy; and she's gone to meet her lover. But here am I talking about my own affairs, and forgetting you. You must have food; you must be looked after."

"Why should you do this?" asked Andrew Judkin, detaining the other, as he was hurrying out of the room. "In all this great city, men have thrust me from their doors, and threatened me, and shrunk away from me; why should you do this?"

"Well, you see—it's because I feel I ought to," replied Bob, simply. "I've been lucky enough to come into a lot of money—more than I shall ever need; and I've had such a rough time myself, for years and years, that I think I ought to do what I can to smooth the way for other people. You see," he added, sinking his voice a little, "I had a brother, who was a bit of a hard nut, and who built up a big fortune, and kept it all to himself. Poor fellow!—he's dead, and it isn't quite fair to talk about him; but I'm afraid he didn't get much out of his money, after all; I'm not sure that he wasn't poorer than I was—because I had love, and kindness, and gentleness about me, and friends who were ready to help me, even if they were poor themselves; he had nothing of all that, I should imagine —lived in this great house all alone—and died, without a soul to say they were sorry. Awful—wasn't it?"

Bob hurried away; remembered in time that there was a bell in the room, and came back to ring it. Giving rapid orders, in a few moments a substantial meal was set before his extraordinary guest; and Bob stood aside, rubbing his hands in anticipation of what that guest would think of the repast.

Strangely enough, however, Andrew Judkin drew back from it, and looked round the room in a frightened fashion—looked, most of all, at that corner

where the shadows were deepest, and where there seemed to stand the figure of the Child. Perhaps, with those eyes upon him, he remembered forlorn wretches he had seen in the wintry streets—remembered, even, a meal he had eaten, in a certain poor lodging, where a tiny bed stood in a corner. He drew back from the table; and, keeping his eyes on that shadowy Child, as though for inspiration, waved his hand, as if to put the food from him, and spoke in a hurried whisper.

"No—no—I couldn't eat, with the memory upon me of all I have seen, since I have wandered in this dreadful city; the food would choke me. Besides—there is something in this place that frightens me; I know it—and yet I don't know it; it's like a grave, from which old ghosts rise, to haunt me. Let me go—let me go! See—it is going, too; it points the way! Let me go!"

Thrusting aside Bob Judkin, who would have stopped him, he darted from the room, and through the hall; opened the outer door, and stumbled down the steps into the street. Bob Judkin, forgetful of everything in his amazement, came hurrying after him; caught his arm, and twisted him about, so as to look into his face.

"At least, take something with you; I can't let you go like this," exclaimed Bob. "If you won't take anything for yourself," he added, as the other man drew away from him, and shook his head, "at

least, take something for others. I want to do some good—and I don't know how to set about it. You must know of some—as poor and hopeless and helpless as yourself—who need food or lodging; there are many such, you know."

"Yes—there are many," said Andrew Judkin, slowly.

"Then take it for them. They'll listen to you, and take it from you, because you are poor, like themselves; I should only blunder, and hurt them, if I tried. Come—for the sake of my brother, who is dead, and who might have done so much with all his wealth—for his dead sake—take it!"

"For his dead sake!" echoed Andrew Judkin, slowly. "Yes—I'll take it."

Bob Judkin put some coins into his hands; gold gleamed among the coins, and this strange messenger of charity dropped it all into his pockets, without looking at it, or counting it. Then he turned and hurried away down the dark street. Bob Judkin, pausing a moment before going back into his house, thought that the wanderer seemed to go on steadily, with his eyes fixed upon something before him, as though he followed some invisible guide. Yet he went steadily, as with a purpose.

That strange and ghostly figure of the Child seemed to lead him, and point the way; but there were other ghosts about him as he went. Ghosts of men he had thrust aside, and trampled on, in

the fierce rush for wealth—ghosts of those to whom he had done no direct wrong, but whom he might have helped and succoured, if he had cared to do so. They crowded about him now, in the dark and snowy streets, seeming to hold him back—to thrust out shadowy hands to stop him, and keep him from doing that which he knew must be done. And ever before him—eluding his grasp, and seeming to flit on, like a mere shadow among shadows—was that strange figure—leading him—beckoning him on. He would have been glad, for very weariness, to sink upon the ground, and sleep where he fell; yet he dared not. He clung to that shadowy thing before him, as his one hope—the one chance left to him, to reach sane things, and to clear that heavy cloud from his brain.

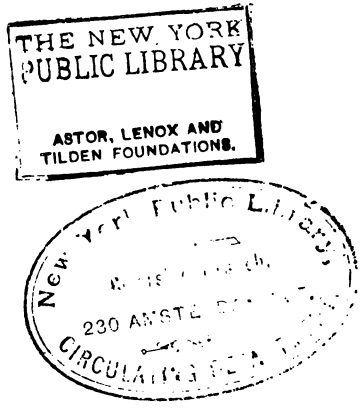
Again and again, as he went, he seemed to get nearer to some recollection of who he was, or had been; again and again, he touched, as in that house that had once been his, some mere shred of memory; only to lose it again on the instant. Thus, he knew that, in some former life—long forgotten—he had had some connection with the house; felt, too, in a dim way, old callous brutal words beating in upon his brain—words which he must have used. So strong was the memory of them upon him, that he stopped in the dark street, to clasp his hands over his eyes, and to strive to get them more clearly.

"Oh, God," he prayed, in a broken whisper, "if I have sinned against any man, or against any woman—teach me what I can do—teach me how I may regain what I have lost. Bring back memory to me; if I have been, in any old time, proud and brutal, humble me to the dust—teach me what to do. For Thou knowest best!"

How long he stood like that, trembling and pleading, he did not know; but when presently his hands fell away from his face, and he looked about him, the grim shadows that had beset him were gone. The night was clear, and a few faint stars were peeping out above him. Strangely, too, the figure of the Child stood clearly before him; and—God be praised!—for the first time, its eyes were smiling.

Andrew Judkin fell upon his knees in the snow, and raised his clasped hands to the figure of the Child. From far away, borne on the still air, there floated the sound of an organ, in some dim old church, and the voices of the choristers, rising and falling in soft and holy music. The bowed and stricken man wept, in helpless pity for himself, as he knelt there.

"Spirit of something pure and sweet and good," he whispered to the figure, "I know not what you would have me do, or where you seek to lead me. I am alone and helpless; don't leave me again. Perhaps, in that old time I have forgotten, before


THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

The Spirit of his Better Self.

I fell, and came to want and misery, I may have been something like you—I may have been——"

"Andrew Judkin—this once was you!" The Child touched itself on the breast. "I am the Spirit of that better, purer self you left behind, and crushed out of memory, Andrew Judkin."

"Andrew Judkin!" The lost man put his hands again before his eyes, and strove to think. "Was I Andrew Judkin? I have a thought that once—long ago—men called me by that name. What did I do; how have I changed so much, to be so little like you now?"

"You did nothing that the world might call very wrong, Andrew Judkin," said the Child. "You lived cleanly, as men reckon; you were a decent citizen. Yet, in your pride and your power, you scoffed at the brighter things a merciful God sent into a darkened world; you cried out that love and beauty were mere names, signifying nothing; from your high place in the world, you laughed at and spurned the things without which the world is nothing. And you turned a poor weak old creature into the streets, to starve—deriding her prayers and tears—for the whim of a moment."

"No—no—not that; surely not that," whispered Andrew, in horror.

"Yes; that was what you did," went on the Child. "And yet that broken old creature was the first to take you in, when you lay fainting and half

dead, at the door of her poor lodging; that woman, whom you had flung aside, was the first to feed you, and to give you what she needed herself. Andrew Judkin, in your pride and your virtue, you have drawn aside, many and many a time, from some lost and fallen creature in the streets, lest the very touch of her should pollute you; and yet such a creature drew your poor rags about you, and would not take money from you, lest you should need it. Will you learn more, Andrew Judkin—will you make some atonement; or will you die, and carry that heavy load before your Maker?"

"Help me—save me—show me what to do!" cried the man, still upon his knees. "I do not ask to go back to what I was; only show me what I can do, to blot out some of the mistakes I have made."

The figure of the Child turned, and went away down the street; Andrew Judkin scrambled up from his knees, and followed. On and on they went, into some of the lowest quarters of London; and there, presently, the figure before him stopped, and seemed to wait for something.

Slowly along the street came a woman—an old woman, bent with her age, yet of a clean and decent appearance; in her arms she carried something, closely wrapped up. Andrew Judkin, standing still in the quiet street, to watch her as she came, saw that she wept softly to herself as she

hurried along; and that when she slackened her pace, to rest, her head was bent low over what she carried, and she cried despairingly and helplessly to herself.

He was moving toward her, with some vague thought of comforting her, when another figure darted out from the shadows on the other side of the narrow street, and ran toward the old woman. It was the figure of a younger woman, and it seemed familiar to Andrew Judkin. He drew back, and watched the meeting.

For a moment, the old woman shrank away from the younger one, and clasped her burden more closely to her breast. For some strange reason, the younger woman stopped, as though repelled by that sudden action; then, on an impulse, stretched out her arms.

As she did so, the old woman raised her head, and looked fully at her; and the watching man knew her. It was the woman some one had called Mrs. Bleak, who had given him food and shelter, so short a time before.

Again the voice of the Child seemed to sound in his ears. "This was the woman, Andrew Judkin, whom you turned out into the streets, to starve—who had a little child dependent on her for bread; you laughed her to scorn, when she spoke of it, and would not listen."

"I have money now," cried Andrew, fumbling

eagerly in his pockets. "If she is in want or trouble, I can help her."

"She would not take it," replied the Child. "There is a pride in her, greater and better than any pride that was ever yours. She would not take it. Wait; something so low and broken and fallen that men, such as you were, turn from it in horror, shall teach you the deepest lesson you have yet to learn. Wait."

The younger woman had drawn nearer yet—had ventured, in infinite compassion, to lay a hand upon the old woman's precious burden. Slowly yielding to that gentle touch, the old woman released what she carried; the younger one caught it, with a smothered cry, to her breast, and held it there as though it healed and soothed something raging within her.

"I won't wake her," she whispered. "You'd have fallen in another minute. Where are you going, on such a bitter night as this?"

"I was a goin' to take 'er where she'd be well cared for; it's the only thing as I can do now," replied the old woman, in a low voice. "Thank ye kindly; you 'ave a 'eart in you—you 'ave."

"I had once," said the woman, bending low over the sleeping child. "What's her name?"

"Kitty. She's my gran'child."

"Kitty? That's my name," said the other, in a low voice. "She's a pretty baby; pray God she'll

grow to be a better woman than I am. Oh—don't take her from me"—this, as the old woman made a sudden movement, as if to take the baby away—"I sha'n't hurt her. Where are you taking her?"

"I've 'ad a chance—this many times—to take 'er to a 'orsepital, w'ere a good friend of mine will look after her," replied Mrs. Bleak. "You see, I lorst me work; an' to-night the lan'lord turned me out, me bein' a bit be'ind'and with me rent. I can manage anyw'eres, but Kitty won't stand no chance roughin' it. So I thought——"

"Come on," broke in the other woman, quickly. "The sooner she's there, the better; this ain't a night for a sick child to be out in. Show me the way; I'll carry her."

She seemed but a frail creature herself—seemed to find even the slight weight of the child a difficulty. But she went on bravely, with the old woman trudging beside her; Andrew Judkin followed, at a little distance, unseen by them. Coming presently to the great doors of the place they sought, they went inside, leaving Andrew waiting in the street. He looked toward the figure of the Child, as if hoping that it would speak, or tell him what to do, but it was silent.

In a little time, the two women came out again; the elder one crying softly, and hiding her face in a corner of her poor shawl. They stopped at the foot of the steps, in the desolate street, and, after

a moment or two, Mrs. Bleak put on some show of bravery, and dried her eyes.

"Where will you go?" asked the younger woman.

"Anyw'eres, my dear; don't you worry about me. I'm old—but I takes a lot of killin', I do; an' I'll find a corner somew'eres, to rest my old 'ead, an' dream peaceful about the child. Don't you worry about me."

"Look here," said the other, quickly, "go to my place. It's poor and mean enough, but no one will disturb you there. See—here's the key."

The old woman beat off the eager outstretched hands with her own feeble ones. "No—no—not me," she exclaimed. "It'd be a poor thing for me to tuck meself up warm in bed, an' leave you in the streets. Not me!"

"Think of this," said the younger woman, laying a hand on her shoulder. "This pretty baby of yours is all you have in the world; you want to live, to see her grow up; you want her to come back to you, strong and well, to gladden your old eyes. Suppose you died in the streets to-night—who would look after her? She would be cast alone on the world—to grow up, at the best, as a pauper child; to grow up, at the worst, like me. You have so much to live for, old as you are; I have so little."

"I can't do it—I can't do it!" exclaimed Mrs.

Bleak, still waving away the key the other held out to her.

"You must. Think of this again; I'd like to think, when I tread the wretched streets at night sometimes, that the pretty baby I held in my arms, and who bears my name, will grow up bright and clean and pure; that will be something to think of, and to remember. Let me think that—won't you? I can be proud of that, if of nothing else."

Mrs. Bleak was wavering; was looking about her where she stood, in evident horror of the dark streets.

"I can get another lodging," urged the other, in a low voice; "I know a friend who will take me in. Come—it's near at hand; I'll take you there."

They went on together, Andrew Judkin still following. Turning at last into a miserable side street, they went into an open doorway and up a common stair; near the top the younger woman unlocked a door, and drew Mrs. Bleak inside. Andrew was just about to turn away, when the door opened again, and the woman came out. She looked at him suspiciously, and drew back.

"Who are you?" she demanded. "What do you want?"

"Only to help you—to help her," he assured her, pointing to the closed door. "She—she was kind to me once; I have money; I want to help her." He drew the money Bob Judkin had given him

from his pockets, and held it out to her. "Take it all."

"Why—where did you get this?" she asked in astonishment, bending down to look at the coins, in the dim light of the stairway. "There is gold here."

"I know—I know; I got it honestly," he said. "Take it—give it to her; I want none of it."

Still looking at him wonderingly, she took the money from him; opened the door, and went in again. Andrew Judkin, on the stairs outside, heard all that was said.

"No—no—I can't take it," said the voice of the old woman. "Oh, my dear—my dear—how did you get it?—how did you——"

The younger woman seemed suddenly to clap a hand over the mouth of Mrs. Bleak. "Before God —not that way!" she cried. "Not the way you think—I swear it!"

Andrew Judkin, waiting on the stairs, heard a confused murmur, and the sound of weeping; presently the younger woman came out again.

"Here—take it," she said. "She would only take a few shillings; here's the rest."

He turned, and went as rapidly as possible down the stairs, leaving the money in her hands. So sudden was the movement, that he had fairly got into the street before she caught him. Then she laid a firm hand on his shoulder, and held him.

"I won't take it," she said.

"If not for yourself—at least for others," he urged. "There must be many in this great city, who sin to live, as you must sin."

"Many—many others—God knows!" she whispered, hiding her face.

"Take it—take it, and help them," he urged eagerly. "Do this good, for once at least. See—I'll trust you—freely. If any poor lost soul looks with shrinking eyes on shame to-night, for the sake of bread—save her—hold her back—for one night at least, in all the dreadful year. Will you do this?"

She raised her face to the stars; he thought, as he looked at her, what splendid purpose there was in her eyes. She raised her hands suddenly, and put her lips to the coins; looked at him with brimming eyes.

"Before God, I will!" she whispered. "I don't know who you are, or whence you come; but, to-night, something has been stirred in me that never was stirred before. I seem to feel the warm touch of that baby here"—she laid her hands upon her breast—"and it moves me, and wakes in me old thoughts and old longings I thought were dead. Yes—I'll do it!"

He stopped her as she was going. "Why not seek a lodging somewhere," he asked, "and do this by day?"

"The night is the time for me," she replied, sadly. "Besides, lost creatures such as I am haunt the night, and are more easily found."

"But you look ill and worn," he began again.

"Near to death, I think," she replied, turning her haggard face toward him, with a smile. "But that sha'n't stop me to-night; don't try to hold me back now."

She looked at him again—and looked again at the stars; turned swiftly, and hurried away through the snowy streets.

CHAPTER VIII

The Man of the Still Face

IT was Christmas Eve. The great world lay wrapt in snow, and locked in ice; even London had kept its snowy mantle a little longer than usual, and had its roofs and spires outlined and set off in white. People talked of a good old-fashioned Christmas time, and were the merrier, because of the seasonable look of things; even the children—little wiseacres that they are—began to believe in the illustrated papers, and to think that Christmas need not be a time of rain and fog of necessity.

It might have puzzled that forlorn wretch, called Andrew Judkin, to know exactly how he had got through the hours since he had parted with that strange woman in the street. It was all like some curious uneasy dream, from which he thought sometimes he must start awake, and come back to the realities of that life he had forgotten. Gradually, too, the remembrance of that night was stirring in him—that night when disaster had fallen upon him, and he had dropped suddenly, as it were, into the existence he knew now. Up to a certain point

he could trace it; but there memory stopped, confronting him with a dead wall, beyond which he could not see.

By dint of much striving, and much patient hammering out of the business in his mind, he came clearly to understand that, in that life wherein men had called him Andrew Judkin, he had been rich and prosperous; he had that dim feeling still in him that he had known what it was to exercise authority, and to be master over others. That was the hardest thing for him to realize now; he could not, for quite a long time, understand how he—broken, ragged creature that he was—had ever held the respect of men.

Slowly and painfully, he crept, as it were, along darkened ways, back upon the tedious paths of his former history; awakening memory took him that far, at least. It had taken him, in the first place, back to his old house, even though he did not know, at the time, what place it was; it took him now to other places that had once been familiar—called up, in the darkened chamber of his mind, the recollection of faces and of names he had once known.

Creeping painfully through the streets this Christmas Eve, heedless of the busy hum of voices about him, and struggling always to grasp again all that had eluded him, he saw a face go past in the gathering night—and knew it. Only for a moment; but it had looked at him, and had been

recognised with certainty. He could give no name to it; only in that hidden chamber of his brain it had its counterpart.

It was the face of a tall man, hurrying on through the streets, and had merely glanced at him, in idle curiosity, for a moment; but, as it flashed past, Andrew Judkin limped after it. Footsore and weak, and faint for want of food and rest as he was, he could not hope to keep up with the hurrying figure; it was gone out of sight in a few moments. But it left a strong and fixed impression behind it.

That impression was one of danger. It would be impossible to say what the man feared; even while it was nothing definite, he knew that danger was in the very air about that face—was as certain of it as though the man had menaced him as he passed. He stopped in the street, looking after the hurrying figure, and trying to think what danger it was, and what person it threatened.

It could not mean danger to him; he had sunk too low for anything else to have power to harm him. But he felt so certain that the impression in his mind was a right one, that he longed to have the power to hurry after the man, and stop him, or drag him back. He strove to run after the man, but stopped, from sheer weakness, in a moment or two, and sank down on a door-step.

"I know him," he muttered to himself, "I

comes out of that past I have forgotten; he rises out of the grave of dead things. Somewhere—in that former time—he has stood before me—has talked with me. Where was it? I should know that strange set face, like a mask—that face that nothing can change or soften. What new work is here for me to do?"

He looked about him, in the hope that he might see that shadowy figure of the Child, to guide him; but he was alone. For some strange reason, he found himself trembling at the thought of what this man who had passed him in the street might do—fearful of some power that man held. He tried to reason with himself that he was wrong—that a face, among a hundred others in the street, could mean nothing to him. But still that strange impression of danger impending hung over him, and would not be dismissed.

Memory, stirring in him again, urged him toward that house which had once been his—brought him almost unconsciously to it. And here the recollection of that face was stronger than ever; the still white changeless thing was about him, in the very air of the quiet street, in a hundred forms. Now, he saw it grinning at him from the blank window of a house he passed; now, a man who stopped to look curiously at him had that face, set for a moment on his shoulders, before it changed into a strange one. In the poor tortured troubled brain

of Andrew Judkin, it seemed to float between him and the house he sought, and to drive him back.

He limped painfully up the steps, and rang the bell. The servant who came to the door was the man who had formerly admitted him, by Bob Judkin's orders; he recognised the tramp, as he thought him, and would have shut the door upon him; remembering, however, that this creature had been in the house but a little time before, and had interviewed his master, he held the door open a little way, and demanded, in an aggrieved tone, what was wanted.

"There is some one here I want to see," said Andrew, looking at the man helplessly. "I don't know his name—I forget that—I have forgotten so many things. But he was kind to me—and he gave me money."

"If you're lookin' fer the master, 'e's away," replied the man. "Left this mornin', with the young missis."

"I must see him," muttered Andrew, still with the disturbing thought of that face he had seen for a moment in the street upon him. "I don't want to beg; don't think that. But I must see him—if only for a moment. Where is he?"

"Your sort never does want to beg," observed the man, with mild sarcasm. "But there—it ain't my business; the guv'nor must please 'imself, I suppose. 'E's gone to Barking, to see some friends;

I 'eard 'im say they 'ad a show down there, whatever 'e means by that."

"Barking? I don't know where that is," said Andrew, in perplexity. "How shall I find it?"

"'Ow should I know?" retorted the man. "It's out East 'Am way—that's all I know."

The door was closed, and Andrew Judkin was left alone in the street. There was an increasing terror upon him—a terror he could not define. The spirit of the Child was gone; and, in place of it, far on before him in the dreary night, he seemed to see that tall threatening figure of the man with the still face—ever going on, of set purpose. He wanted desperately to come up with it—longed, for some extraordinary reason, to stop it.

By dint of much patient asking of questions, he got at last upon the road which should lead him to Barking. Spent and weary as he was, there was yet no thought in his mind but that he must reach the place; that seemed but a part of the toilsome thing he had to do — a part of that journey, on the first stages of which the Child had led him.

He came near to it at last, and found it to be a dreary enough place, with patches of land, half built upon, and with tumble-down houses, stuck here and there on the outskirts of it. The place itself, as he drew nearer to it in the darkness, presented the aspect of a colony of poor little houses,

crowded together in narrow streets, with much waste land all about.

He began to wonder what he should do, now that he had got so far; began to dread that he might have been sent on a false errand, and that the people he sought were not here at all. All the narrow streets were swarming with life; but he avoided them. Getting out beyond them, he came to some marshy fields, covered with snow, and with here and there a gleaming stretch of ice, shining white and smooth under the stars, to show where frozen water was. In all the wide landscape, as he looked across those fields, there was no sign of life. Shivering and shuddering, and feeling more desperately lonely even than before, he sat down on a bank, beside a stile, and thought again of that face he had seen in a London street.

Suddenly, at his feet, and going out in curious dark dints across the snow-covered fields, he saw a line of footmarks. Mechanically and half-unconsciously, he began to count them, so far as he could see them; desisted from that, to wonder vaguely who had gone alone in that direction. For, save for those footmarks, the fresh snow was unbroken anywhere.

He got up from where he sat, and began to follow them. There was no reason in his doing so; and at first he merely followed them, as he had followed, during the past day or two, every vagrant

fancy that had come into his hazy brain. Perhaps, too, there was a thought in his mind that here was some lonely wanderer, like himself, who shunned the

The footsteps in the snow.

noise of streets, and sought solitude. Whatever the reason, he set his weary feet, as well as he could, in the footprints of the unknown wayfarer, and went on after him.

He came to the hedge on the further side of the first field, and looked about him; there was no one in sight. There was a stile here, also; and he leaned across it, to see in what direction the foot-

steps went. To his astonishment, and something to his uneasiness, there were no footsteps to be seen; they stopped where he was. Muttering to himself, he peered about again; and presently began laboriously to climb the stile; stopped, with one leg drawn across the top of it, to stare at something that had risen up in the starlight, black against the snow behind the hedge.

It was the man of the still face. Andrew Judkin was so startled, at coming thus face to face, in this wild open country, with the man who had seemed to haunt him, that he stumbled in trying to get over, and fell at the feet of the other man; scrambled up in a moment, and faced him.

The other man, for his part, did a strange thing. He came forward slowly, with his eyes fixed on Andrew Judkin, and with his jaw dropping—stared at him—struck at him wildly—and turned to run, with a frightened cry. But Andrew caught at him, and held him back—clung to him desperately.

"Let me go—keep off!" cried the tall man, battling with him, and at the same time keeping his face fearfully averted. "Who are you?—what are you?—where do you come from?"

Still clinging to him, the forlorn man had a dim remembrance suddenly of what that shadowy Child had said; the words flashed back over him in a moment. Holding fast to the other, and dragged by him on his knees in the snow, this broken ragged

creature startled the echoes of the place with a cry.

"I am Andrew Judkin!"

The man gasped, and ceased to struggle, and came near to him; after a moment, laid hands upon him, and dragged him to his feet.

"You are like Andrew Judkin—very like him," he said, in a whisper. "But Andrew Judkin is dead; he lies at the bottom of a river. Why—what the devil is this?"—he seized the ragged creature, and shook him fiercely. "Do you think to frighten me like this? I'll let you know that Giles Ouseley is not the man to be——"

"Ouseley! I know you—I remember—I know you well!" cried Andrew, shaking with excitement, and still holding to the other. "You stood in a room once, in the firelight, and talked to me . . . or did I dream it? God of mercy!—how much have I dreamed, and how much is true!"

Giles Ouseley was looking at him steadily, but his lips were twitching. Once, he drew a hand across his forehead nervously, as though doubtful if he were awake; looked about him for a moment, over the snowy landscape, and at the glare of light from the streets in the distance. Then suddenly, after looking long at the miserable trembling man before him, he began to laugh. It was the most horrible laughter possible, because there was no mirth in it; indeed, it had something of a species

of grim rage in it. After a little, his laughter died away, and he stood pulling at his lips with nervous hands, and evidently thinking deeply.

"Andrew Judkin!" he muttered at last. "What devilish trick is this?—what sorry masquerade are you attempting? You started on a journey—at night—but a few days since; how come you in this dress, and in this plight?"

It was curious to see how the master humbled himself before the man, in this strange turn of events, and how quick the man was to take advantage of that new humility.

"I—I don't remember—I don't know," replied Andrew, in a low voice, glancing down at his dress. "Once—a long time ago—I knew you—and I was different from what I am now."

"Different! I should imagine you were," said Ouseley, looking him up and down in amazement. "Why are you trying to fool me like this? What have you done, that you should hide from every one in this fashion?"

"Don't ask me!" exclaimed Andrew Judkin, wringing his hands, and looking all about him. "In those days when I knew you, I brought sorrow and trouble and bitterness in my train; I was hard and callous, where I should have been merciful—grinding, where I should have been generous. At least, so I am told—and so I believe."

"Well—you were certainly a hard nut to crack,"

replied Ouseley, with a dry laugh. "And so I suppose this is a sort of penance—eh?"

"No penance I can perform will atone," replied Andrew. "Since I lost—lost something—since I forgot—I have tried to make some atonement; and I have seen such scenes as few men have lived through. Tell me—what was I—in that old time?"

Mr. Ouseley shook his head at him. "You're a wily old bird," he said. "You've done all this, for some purpose of your own, and you think you'll carry it through, even with me. Tell me—how did you get out of that train?"

"How did I get out of that train?" muttered Andrew Judkin to himself, as he pressed his hands over his eyes. "How did I get out of that train? I know—I remember—it's all coming back to me!" He was shaking with excitement, and his words seemed to trip over each other, in his eagerness. "I know now. I started on a journey; I went to a place—at night—where an old woman was singing. I remember the song—I remember it quite clearly. Then, in the train, going through the fog, I had a dream; that strange Child came to me—seemed to call me; I got out at a little station, that was locked up and in darkness——"

"And so missed the accident," said Ouseley, looking at him curiously. "God knows what you have been through since—or what has befallen you, that your mind wanders so, and remembers things

so slowly. But you're dead, Andrew Judkin—and I defy you to come to life again. Why, you old wreck"—Giles Ouseley laughed at the exquisite humour of the thing—"do you know that I've offered a reward for the recovery of your body from the river?"

"I have walked again through familiar places," muttered Andrew Judkin to himself. "I have stood in places I dimly remembered. That Andrew Judkin who seems to have dropped out of life—who was he?—what was he?"

"As if you didn't know!" exclaimed Mr. Ouseley, sneeringly. "'Pon my word, you carry the thing off well. Don't you know you were as rich as Crœsus, you old humbug?"

"Rich! Then who has taken my place; who has all those riches now?"

"I begin to believe you have forgotten things," muttered Mr. Ouseley. "I wonder what on earth has happened to you?" Aloud he said: "Don't you know that your brother has stepped into your shoes?—don't you know that that vagrant, whom you despised, and with whom you would have nothing to do, reigns in your stead?"

"My brother? I remember more clearly still. I went to a house that was familiar—money was given me, by a man who said kindly words to me. I stood in a room . . . I know it now; the room in which you once stood beside me, Giles Ouseley!"

"This is the strangest thing of all," said Ouseley, looking at him intently. "I didn't know you'd been there. And so this brother of yours didn't recognise you—eh? This is the most beautifully complicated business I've known. And so I suppose you're coming back from the grave, Andrew Judkin, to have the laugh of us all—eh?"

"You don't understand," said Andrew, sadly. "In those old days, that seem so far away, I did not know all that I know now; I had not seen so deeply into life as I have since, even when my brain has been clouded. I could not go back to it; I could not take from this brother of mine that which he believes to be his own. Dimly—like a child groping in the dark—I am finding my way; the humblest and the meanest have shown me where it lies. No—I could not go back; a better man than I reigns in my place!"

"No—I'll take care you never go back," muttered Giles Ouseley. "You've chosen this new way of life—this degradation, that seems to fit you; I'll take care that you stick to it. I have a game to play, in which I don't desire that you should take a hand."

"What do you mean?" asked Andrew Judkin.

"I mean that I am making up to myself for all the years I slaved and toiled for you. This little freak or whim on your part has given me, at one stroke, what I never could have gained in

any other way; it was very kind of you. Your brother is a dear old fool, quite content to leave everything in my hands, to do as I will; I rather think that Giles Ouseley will turn his long experience to account, and come out rather well. Luckily for me, I have that in my hands which can bring him and that scornful little daughter of his to their knees, in a moment, if need be. It's well that your memory is gone, Andrew Judkin—or you might remember too much."

"My memory is coming back to me, like some old tale I heard, years ago, and thought I had forgotten," replied Andrew. "Let it suffice that I am content to let this man be in my place; I seem to know so much better what is right and just now than I ever did before."

"That's very noble of you," sneered Ouseley, "but you seem to forget something else that happened, before you so conveniently disappeared."

"I have forgotten so many things," replied Andrew Judkin. "What is this that I have forgotten?"

"You never meant your brother to have your property at all, you know," said Ouseley, putting his hands in his pockets, and shaking his head slowly at the bewildered man. "You hated his vagabond life so much (although you seem to have taken to vagabond ways on your own account lately) that you would have nothing to do with him;

swore always that he should never touch your money. You were so strong upon that point, that you made a will, leaving everything you had to scientific institutions. You don't remember that, I suppose?"

"Yes—I have a dim remembrance of it," said Andrew. "But they need never know of that; no one knows where that will is—except——"

"Except me," broke in Ouseley, with a quick nod. "The truth of the matter is, Mr. Andrew Judkin, that, in the days when you were respectable, you were a little too confidential with me. I learned too much of your private affairs. Shall I tell you how the knowledge has served me?"

Andrew Judkin stood there, under the stars, watching this man of the quiet face; and knowing, in some strange way, that he, as well as others, were in the man's power. He waited eagerly, to hear what was coming.

"You've played a pretty good game, Andrew Judkin," went on Ouseley, "but I've played a better. I had a purpose to serve when I supposed you dead, in putting that vagabond brother of yours into your place. I knew that the property wasn't his; I had already seen the will. But that knowledge gave me the power I wanted."

"Power over whom?" Andrew Judkin asked eagerly.

"Power over Bob Judkin's pretty daughter.

You thought that the man who had served you so many years was a mere thing without nerves or feelings—a something to come at your bidding, at a certain hour in the morning, and to go away at a certain hour at night. But your machine had desires and passions, like better men; and your machine had taken a fancy to this pretty niece of yours. But the pretty niece, being a little fool, would have nothing to do with him."

"I'm delighted to hear it," retorted Andrew, with something of his old manner returning to him. "I wouldn't have thought much of her, if she had looked with kindly eyes on you."

"Don't be impudent," said Ouseley. "It isn't your place to be impudent now; you've left all that behind—the old Andrew Judkin is dead, you know."

"I didn't mean to hurt your feelings," said Andrew, humbly. "Only I had a sort of dim remembrance that this young girl loved another man; I think I was told that."

"She thinks she does," replied Ouseley, contemptuously; "she's too young to know her own mind properly. However, lest there should be any doubt about the matter, I intend to see her to-night, and to put plainly before her what she will gain, if she is reasonable—and what she will lose, if she is unreasonable."

"What are you going to do?" asked Andrew Judkin, watching the other man keenly.

Giles Ouseley took a turn or two up and down in the snow—stopping once or twice to kick at the white frozen stuff, and send it in little showers from under his feet. Coming back to where Andrew Judkin stood, he laughed, in that unpleasant fashion of his, and answered the question.

"I want the girl—and I want the money; I mean to have both. You don't count; if you stood now, before any one who once knew you, you'd find it difficult to make them believe your story. You are deep down at the bottom of a river—washing about, with other unfortunates, on your way to the sea. In that muddled head of yours is no recollection clearly of what has happened to you. So it comes to this: that I have taken this girl and her father, and have rescued them from poverty; that I have advanced money to them, until they come into the whole of the fortune. A word from me, and I sweep that fortune clean away from them, by producing the will you made. But that wouldn't suit my purpose—because I should lose everything myself. But, on the other hand, I know that I can play upon this girl's fears—can threaten to snatch away that which has already, in a matter of days, lifted her father from misery and privation. To-night I go to her, and give her a last chance of being reasonable, and throwing aside this lover of hers for me. She has laughed at me once; let her

laugh again, and I produce that will. Now, do you understand?"

"But I never really meant, Ouseley, that the money should go to any one but them," pleaded Andrew Judkin. "At least, I do not mean it now; I understand all the happiness it is bringing to them, and to others; and I would not take it back to-night, if death threatened me. I did not know before that this man, who took me in out of the streets—this girl, who pressed money into my hands —were my brother and his child. I might come back from the grave to-night, but I would not do it—I swear I would not do it, however easy it might be. Give me back that paper."

"Oh, dear, no—not for the world," replied Ouseley, shaking his head. "This is my opportunity—my one chance to bring that scornful little beauty to her knees, and show her that she can not laugh at a man of my stamp so lightly as she has done. I'll humble her—I'll break her; I'll make her plead to me before another hour has gone by. I have the paper here; I have been waiting for a chance to see her. I came out here alone, to think about it, and to make up my mind exactly what to say."

The inflexible face seemed to have grown harder than ever, Andrew Judkin thought, as he looked at it in the faint light of the stars. He had a sudden memory of that light girlish figure hurrying

down the street, away to meet her lover; saw her, in imagination, at the mercy of this man, who had no mercy in him; and shuddered. On a sudden impulse, he fell upon his knees in the snow, and raised his clasped hands to the man who, not so long before, had bowed and cringed before him.

"See, Ouseley—see—on my knees! You don't know—you don't understand—you can't know all that I have seen—all that I have learned, in these past few days. Picture to yourself what it must be, when I tell you that I am willing to drop as completely out of life as though that dark river hid me, because I know that my death can bring some measure of blessing to the world I strove so hard to spoil. I scoffed at love, and human charity, and beauty; I wouldn't believe they existed; I thank the good God of all things that I have found them, when it was not in my power to buy or to command them. This seems but the end of what I have set myself to do; don't stand in my way now—don't break down all that I have tried, blunderingly, and through misery and humiliation, to carry out! Don't do it, Ouseley; on my knees, I pray you not to do it!"

The poor broken creature was sobbing, in his helplessness, and in his fear that this man would exercise the power he held. Ouseley looked at him, for a few moments, in astonishment; then looked *round* at the wide wintry landscape, as though ap-

pealing to it to witness this strange thing that had come to pass.

"Why—see what a thing is here!" he exclaimed. "That this man, who rode in pride and power through London—who had servants to do his bidding—who ground down men, to get money from them he did not need—that this man should crouch at my feet like this, to plead for a girl he scarcely knows! You're dreaming still, Andrew Judkin."

"No—no—not dreaming; I'm awake at last!" cried Andrew. "I know now what life is; I know that the God who came among men at this blessed Christmas time, rightly scorned such men as I was; that when He planted in men's breasts those thoughts which find expression even among the humblest and the poorest, He planted seeds that shall blossom into flowers, to gladden the earth, while ever the earth lives. I know it—I know it!"

"Well—awake or dreaming, it doesn't matter to me now," said Ouseley, turning away. "I'm rather glad I met you like this; it will serve to put me on my guard, if you should try to persuade people who you really are. Do you see those lights over there?"—he pointed across the fields, to where a dull glow shone against the sky. "There your precious brother goes back to vagabondage to-night, for an hour or two; he is tired of the purple already, and comes down from his throne, to mix with the show-folk he knew in his wanderings. I

am going there now; I'm going to bring the first pressure to bear. Keep to your dreams, you madman—keep to your dreams!"

He turned, and strode away across the snow. In a moment, Andrew Judkin was on his feet, and went limping after him; caught him by the arm, and twisted him round.

"You sha'n't go—you sha'n't spoil the life of that child, and bring sorrow upon her," he cried, fiercely. "Give me that paper!"

Giles Ouseley turned upon him savagely, and struck at him. But the ragged creature clung to him, and struggled with him, crying and threatening and pleading, and half mad with rage and fear. Finally Ouseley, finding that he could not shake him off, closed with him; and, still striking at him heavily, strove to fling him to the ground. Clinging together so, they struggled over the crisp snow, now this way and now that, yet always locked fiercely together.

Suddenly, a bank of snow on which they fought went down beneath them; and, with Andrew Judkin uppermost, the two men went over it, and plunged down, through some withered bushes, on to a clear space beneath. As they struck this heavily, there was a noise of crashing and grinding and rending; and the two of them, still hanging fast to each other, went through what had seemed to be solid ground into black icy water. Ouseley

cried out, as he went down, to Andrew Judkin, for God's sake to let him go; the other man, possessed with but one idea, clung to him still, and beat at him, and cried out for the paper.

After a moment or two, one figure, gasping and dripping with wet, forced its way up through the broken ice, and scrambled painfully on to the bank; it was Andrew Judkin. Shuddering so horribly that he could scarcely keep his footing on the slippery ground, he leaned over, and peered into the dark water; saw something darker yet, close to the surface, and strove to clutch it; missed it, and fell back exhausted. The instinct to save this creature's life was strong upon him, however, and he made another attempt. This time, he caught at something dank and heavy; struggled with it; and finally got it out on the bank. Forgetful of everything else at that moment, he fumbled about its clothing for the paper; found it, and brought it out, and shook the water from it.

"The will—the wicked will that would have spoilt everything," he whispered, in a shaking voice. "I would not have lost it—not though I had died to get it—not though I died——"

He tore it open, and scanned it eagerly; wrenched it into fragments with his hands; and flung the pieces back into the water. Then, for the first time, the horror of that quiet thing at his feet overcame him; he bent near to it; shook it, and called its

name; pressed his ear down to its damp breast. But all power, for good or for evil, had gone out of it; Giles Ouseley was dead.

The ragged creature, dripping with wet, sat on the bank in the snow, and looked down at the still

The still face.

face—never to move again on earth—and knew fully all that had happened. That cloud that had hung upon his mind had drifted by, and Andrew Judkin had come back fully to life indeed.

CHAPTER IX

The Snow Fairy

THAT humble Temple of the Drama—the booth which had formerly belonged to Bob Judkin, but which was now in the possession of Mr. Tolderoy—had moved, in search of patronage, nearer to London; as it had moved, since it was a booth at all, on many other occasions about the country. And on Christmas Eve it stood, amid the roar and glare of a Fair ground, on the outskirts of Barking.

But, on this particular Christmas Eve, the booth resolutely refused to tolerate any mere outside public. One or two adventurous spirits, in the course of the evening, had endeavoured to enter; and had even rapped impatiently at the closed doors for admittance; but they rapped in vain. The booth was closed to any but the most intimate. The Drama was at rest; and Mr. Tolderoy was entertaining.

Let it not be thought that Mr. Tolderoy was entertaining, in the sense that word might convey of his being in high spirits, and gracing the festival with mirth and jollity on his own account. Mr. Tol-

deroy took life seriously; if he regarded it, even professionally, as a jest, he thought it a remarkably grim one; and his countenance, on this night of all nights in the year, wore its habitual expression of melancholy, for no given reason.

Certainly, if it had been possible, under any circumstances, for Mr. Tolderoy to be in a state of supreme enjoyment, that should have been the occasion. Of course, it is quite probable that he was enjoying himself immensely; but, if so, he took pains to hide it, and that, too, with much success. Yet, to do him justice, he admitted, in an undertone to Bob Judkin, that "in spite of the 'ardness of Mrs. Giddings, it was a night to make a man feel that 'e 'adn't lived in vain!"

On that particular Christmas Eve, simple-hearted, kindly Bob Judkin found himself in his old quarters, under peculiar circumstances—and yet under perfectly natural circumstances. Truth to tell, Bob's wandering life had suited him remarkably well, despite its hardships; he was a vagabond at heart, in the best sense of the word; and stiff rooms and stiff furniture appealed to him not at all. More than that, there was a sensitive feeling, in the good fellow's mind, that the servants knew something of what he had been, and of how sudden his rise to fortune was; he felt that it would take time for him to fit into that more respectable life.

Therefore, when, quite early that same morn-

ing, while Bob and his daughter sat at breakfast, an amazed servant announced "Mr. Tolderoy," and conducted that gentleman into the room, Bob greeted him with delight; and was probably more glad to see him than he had ever been to see any one in his life before.

"My dear Tolderoy," he cried, springing up hastily, and thrusting the servant aside, "this is truly delightful of you. You come like a breath from the life I've left behind. I hope everything is all right? Sit down—have some breakfast."

Mr. Tolderoy, mindful of his manners, had made a laborious circuit of the table, in order to shake hands with Eva; had made the circuit again the other way, just as solemnly, to shake hands with Bob; and now stood, smoothing a large hand all down over his face, and looking about the handsome room. He addressed the furniture generally when he spoke.

"I am not, guv'nor, a sentimental man in general—save in one direction (w'ich 'er name begins with G), nor am I given, as a general thing, to feelings, save also in the direction before indicated; but things is all wrong. But for the fact that there is a lady 'ere—who always was a lady, no matter what 'er station be—I might give vent to words that would blister the furniture. There bein' sich a lady, I do not. But I repeat, most emphatic, that things is all wrong."

"I'm dreadfully sorry to hear this, Tolderoy," said Bob, looking at him in great distress and alarm. "Sit down—and tell me what has happened."

"Thank you, miss—I will say coffee"; this in response to an unspoken question by Eva. "*And* a rasher is not known to do 'arm, at this time o' day, w'en a perfessional man may be said to be restin', an' a buildin' of 'isself up. Thank you again, miss. To speak of private matters (an' I'm sure the young lady, as 'as a 'eart to swell to the voice of love, will forgive me) I would like to say that the party beginnin' with G still flings my affection in me teeth; and that I still find it difficult to do unto 'er as I should, an' as an awjence would expect. Let us say no more; time will wear 'er down, alike in figger an' in fortitude. To come to the general matter, I would like to say that the show is not what it was—an' I don't believe it ever will be again."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Tolderoy," said Bob, glancing at his daughter helplessly. "It's a good show, Tolderoy."

"There ain't a better show—of its class, mind yer—in the country," said Mr. Tolderoy, with deep conviction. "There are points about that there show other shows ain't got. You may remember, guv'nor, the time w'en we nearly got to Earl's Court —eh?"

"I remember it well," said Bob, nodding, and

rubbing his hands. "It was the merest slip in the world that prevented it."

"Ah—an' jealousy—perfessional jealousy," said Mr. Tolderoy, darkly. "We was kept out of that, guv'nor; it was managed; they was afraid of us. As I say, the show's the best in the country; but there's one thing it wants."

"What is that?" asked Bob and his daughter, in the same breath.

"'Eart," said Mr. Tolderoy, emphatically; "that's what it wants—'eart. W'en you was in it, guv'nor, there was 'eart enough in that show to run anythin' on; since you've gorn, the 'eart 'as gorn, too. I would ask you, guv'nor and miss—'ow can I be expected to do justice to the thing—to do what the public expects of me in the big scenes—ter git the 'isses w'ere I ought to get 'em—if I 'as to keep a eye on the door, an' on the pay-box? Man is but mortal, guv'nor—an' w'en there is a party beginnin' with G whose form ain't to be missed, or lorst sight of, loomin' over one, so to speak . . . well—the best show in the world must go wrong, an' it can't be expected as it'll be what it ought to be."

So saying, Mr. Tolderoy set to at his breakfast at a great rate—only looking up now and again to shake his head darkly at Bob or his daughter. Presently, having got through a large amount of food, he looked up, and proceeded with his argument.

"Not, mind yer, that it's bad for business; on the contrary, it's rather good. For, when I'm put out, I throws an amount of passion into my scenes as nearly carries me over the footlights; an' they likes that. The public that pays their tuppences likes passion; they can't see be'ind it; it ain't to be expected, fer the money. But, as a actor, I feels it, an' I knows where I fail. In a word, guv'nor, the old show misses you, and ain't the same without you."

Simple-minded Bob Judkin was so much affected by this speech that he stretched out a hand across the table-cloth, to grasp that of his friend; meeting Mr. Tolderoy's hand, he grasped it warmly, and squeezed it in sympathy.

"I know—I think I understand," he said, in a low voice. "And I'm not sure, Tolderoy, that I don't feel the same—in another sort of way. I've grown so used to the old life—the journeying about from place to place—the sleeping in poor lodgings—the living from hand to mouth—that I find this life a little irksome. Quite between ourselves, Tolderoy, of course; because I suppose, in my heart of hearts, I ought to be grateful for the good fortune that has come to me; I ought to be glad that my struggles are over, and that I have come to peace and prosperity at last. And I *am* glad, Tolderoy, for the sake of my little girl. And don't you give way, Tolderoy," he added; "I know it must seem

strange at first; but the old show will do well, and do perhaps better without me. But this has brought into my mind a favour I wanted to ask of you—a special favour, Tolderoy, at this Christmas season."

"Name it, guv'nor—name it, an' it is yours. I may 'ave bin soured by a certain party, as knows not the meanin' of certain sentiments; but I am not ungrateful for all that you 'ave done for me, guv'nor. Name it."

"Well, Tolderoy," began Bob, hesitatingly, "it seems a foolish thing to speak of—and yet I think—nay, I am sure—you will understand. I was saying to my little girl, only this morning, that some of the happiest Christmasses we have ever spent have been in the old booth; faces we knew and loved have gone from us, but have not been forgotten; God knows, we would not forget them, at any time. But we shall remember them better, and with kindlier feelings, in the old place where we knew them, and where they worked side by side with us—eh, Eva?"

"It's just this, Mr. Tolderoy," broke in the girl, "that we want to come back to you, just for this Christmas time; we want to have a merry time, in the old fashion, in the old place; we want you to shut up the show, and keep out all those impatient people, who want to pay their money—and let us in, instead. Will you?"

"Wot—to see the show?" asked Mr. Tolderoy, in amazement.

"No—not to see the show, Tolderoy," exclaimed Bob, with a laugh. "We know the show by heart, my boy. I don't want to hurt your feelings, but the show wouldn't be anything new to us, Tolderoy. We want you to shut up the show, and let us have a right-down merry Christmas in the booth. I'll provide the dinner, and you shall invite whoever you like, and we'll have a dance afterward. What do you say to that?"

"Not bein' of a lightsome nature meself," replied Mr. Tolderoy, slowly, "I shall probably be an 'umble spectator of the proceedings. In fact, in the present state of my affections, I don't know as I'd even be equal to the dinner; but on that point I'll 'old meself as not committed to anything at present. My idea would be to git in some of them as 'as worked with us side by side, on the road an' off it, this many a year, from one fair to another. Good souls they are—no matter what nature made 'em; no matter whether he drawed 'em out or spread 'em sideways; no matter whether 'e give 'em arms, or taught 'em to write the best copperplate with their toes; good folks all, and as ready for fun and a dance (leastways, them with legs) as any one. An' I give you my word, guv'nor an' miss," added Mr. Tolderoy, with much emphasis, "it'll be the biggest show the old booth 'as ever seen!"

Bob Judkin was in the wildest state of excitement and blissful expectation over the prospect that can be imagined; in five minutes, he gave vent to the wildest suggestions, and the most impracticable projects. Fortunately, the cooler brain of Mr. Tolderoy was brought to bear upon the subject generally, and tended to modify some of the outrageous things Bob would have done.

Bob discovered, however, in the course of one short day, that money possesses an unlimited power to perform miracles; that men who obstinately declare that a certain thing can not be done, for love or money, are induced, by a promise of the latter at least, to do that thing, no matter how difficult it may once have appeared to be; that surly giants, in charge of horses and vans and other things, become, under the magic touch of it, surly no longer, and their horses capable of wonders in the way of strength and endurance. He discovered that provision dealers and pastry-cooks and wine merchants, who began by pleading the impossibility of doing anything at all, at that season, ended by agreeing to do everything. Finally, after a day crowded with disappointments, promises, pleadings, and successes, certain carts set out for Barking, with Mr. Tolderoy riding on the first, to be sure of its safe arrival; and Bob Judkin and his daughter coming last of all, some distance behind, in a four-wheeled cab, with certain cases of wine inside and upon the

roof; and with the driver of it—gay rascal that he was!—with a sprig of mistletoe in his buttonhole, and a huge cigar in a corner of his mouth.

By the time Bob and his daughter got to Barking, it was quite dark, and the fair was in full swing. Only the old booth was doing no business, save on its own private and personal account. Mr. Tolderoy—as solemn and melancholy in appearance as ever—was assisting manfully to get the place in order, for the entertainment of the evening—fitting up tables, and piling benches that were not wanted up in corners; and only desisting from his efforts to launch sarcastic remarks at those of his helpers who did not appear properly to appreciate the necessity for hurry. The appearance of Bob Judkin, tenderly assisting to carry in the wine, caused even the face of Mr. Tolderoy to relax. He can not have been said to smile; Mr. Tolderoy rarely did that; it would be more appropriate to say that his features slid into a gentle expression, and his lips twitched appreciatively for a moment, and then were still.

"I've run round since I got 'ere," whispered Mr. Tolderoy, taking Bob aside, "an' they're all comin'—at least, all them as we know. There's the injyrubber man—an' Saggers the giant—an' Mrs. S. the fat lady—an' the 'uman ostrich (as 'as consented to take his vittles unperfessionally)—an' *the* Boundin' Brothers. Also the owner of the

learned pig; the learned pig stops at home. I think that's all."

"When are they coming?" asked Bob, who was all impatience.

"They closes early, and comes as soon as they've dressed," replied Mr. Tolderoy. Then, lowering his voice, he added impressively, "The party as begins with G is now a preparin' of 'erself in a noo character."

"Indeed?" said Bob, with deep interest.

"Yes, guv'nor—that of a 'eart-breaker. She 'as played it before, sir—but never, believe me, as she'll play it this night. I 'ope," added Mr. Tolderoy, darkly, "I 'ope nothink won't 'appen—I 'ope so, indeed!"

"Does she still resist you, Tolderoy?" asked Bob, feelingly.

"Resist, guv'nor? She won't so much as look at me—save perfessionally. I suppose it ain't to be wondered at; she is that superior, that she 'ad 'er doubts as to whether it was right and proper to invite Mrs. Saggers, the fat lady. I respect 'er for it, guv'nor; but I 'ad to point out that a perfessional *is* a perfessional, after all, an' the drama is the drama; so she give way."

"She is a good-hearted woman, Tolderoy," said Bob.

"Guv'nor—she is all 'eart; she bubbles with it. I 'ave 'oped that it might bubble my way, but it

don't. The things that woman makes me contemplate would shock yer, guv'nor—they would indeed. I've even had a mind"—the face of Mr. Tolderoy was more lengthened and solemn than ever at this point—"I've 'ad a mind to turn to the comic line—to see if *that* would move 'er."

"Don't do it, Tolderoy; don't do it," urged Bob, earnestly. "She respects you, as it is, Tolderoy; but if you——"

"I know—I know," murmured Mr. Tolderoy. "I don't say as I should so far lower meself, unless she drove me to it; but I might. 'Ere she comes."

Here they all came. With much laughter and jollity, and many innocent jokes, those hard-working folk—who lived their lives so far away, as it were, from the public they sought to amuse; and who yet, despite all their oddities, were very simple and very ordinary people, after all—had cast aside, for an hour or two, their strange, unreal life—had come out from the odour of sawdust and naphtha—and had fully made up their minds to enjoy themselves. At first, of course, as might have been expected, Mrs. Giddings carried herself with a certain stiffness to Mrs. Saggers, the fat lady; showed her, in fact, that even though they might be part of the same great profession, one had to draw the line somewhere. But, when once they got *fairly* settled at table, with Bob at the head, and

Mr. Tolderoy at the foot; and when once the first bottles of champagne had gone down the table and up again, even Mrs. Giddings unbent. And then it was that a dark scheme entered into the brain of Mr. Tolderoy.

He began to make eyes at the fat lady. There was no mistake about it, and it was not mere politeness; deliberately, and with malice, he began to make eyes at the fat lady. Love and wine may have made him reckless, and he may have lost sight of the fact that the fat lady's husband was a giant, alike by nature and by profession. In a word, Tolderoy was desperate; he drank the first toast to the fat lady, in a loud voice.

"Mrs. Saggers, ma'am—'ere's full shows to you —an' may yer figger be as 'eavy as the takings."

Mrs. Saggers blushed and giggled, and Mr. Saggers (a very mild-eyed young giant was he, and weak in the knees) looked pleased. Mrs. Giddings looked at Tolderoy, and half raised her glass; but the reckless Tolderoy kept his eyes firmly fixed on the ample charms of Mrs. Saggers. Even when Bob proposed the health of the old show, and all who belonged to it, Tolderoy might never have met Mrs. Giddings before, for any look he gave her.

"Tolderoy," whispered Bob Judkin, in some alarm, when the tables had been cleared away, and all the speeches made, and they were ready for dancing, "Tolderoy—you're going too far!"

"I can't 'elp it, guv'nor," replied Mr. Tolderoy. "I 'ate meself for it—but I'm bein' soured. It's bin pent up for a long time—an' I think that wine must 'ave brought it out. If the party as begins with G dances with any one else, if it's so much as a 'Sir Roger,' there'll be murder. To see a arm round that waist would be too much for me."

Perhaps Mrs. Giddings knew the danger she faced; perhaps her heart was softer even than Mr. Tolderoy gave her credit for. Be that as it may, presently, when the dance was at its height, and the oil lamps were rattling under the influence of the sturdy steps of Mrs. Saggers, who had one of the Bounding Brothers for a partner, Mrs. Giddings seated herself in a corner, away from the others, and gazed pensively at Mr. Tolderoy, who was drinking champagne in gulps at a side table. After a little hesitation, Mr. Tolderoy put down his glass, and, by stages—coming a little way, and going back again, and then coming further—got at last to Mrs. Giddings, and sat down, within about three feet of her.

"It's a 'ot night," said Mr. Tolderoy, staring straight in front of him.

"It is, indeed, Mr. Tolderoy," replied the lady, in a faint voice.

"You make it 'otter, Mrs. G.," said Tolderoy, in the same tone.

"Mr. Tolderoy!" remonstrated the lady, glancing round at him.

"You do, mum," said Tolderoy, desperately. "I don't know what it is, but you 'ave an effect on me, mum, like a Turkish bath. Fust I'm 'ot—as if love was bringing out a rash on me; then I'm cold, as if I was in a draught. It may not be romantic, Mrs. G.—but it's the truth. At the present moment, I can feel a rash all over me."

"It's the champagne," said Mrs. Giddings, looking at him slyly.

"It ain't, mum," retorted Tolderoy. "I may be 'eated—I may 'ave looked on the sparklin' goblet slightly more than usual; but it's love, Mrs. G., that's movin' me at this moment—an' movin' me nearer to yer." Indeed, this was so far true, that Mr. Tolderoy was sliding along the bench, and rapidly decreasing the space which divided him from Mrs. Giddings. "It ain't me legs, Mrs. G.—it's love wot's movin' me."

"Well, I hope it won't move you any further," said Mrs. Giddings. "We shall have every one talking about it."

"I don't mind," said Mr. Tolderoy. "They may 'ave summink else to talk about, before long; I feel it in me bones that I'm like the beasts that perish."

"Don't call yourself names, Tolderoy," said Mrs. Giddings. "It's the easiest thing in the world for

a man to *talk* about love—but unless he . . . Mr. Tolderoy—what are you doing?"

Mr. Tolderoy, whether impelled by love or by his legs it is impossible to say, had slid along the remaining part of the form which divided him from Mrs. Giddings, and had also slid his arm about her waist. Happily for him, too, she did not seem greatly to mind; and a few minutes later, Mr. Tolderoy had plunged into the dance himself, with Mrs. Giddings in his arms. And, wonderful to relate, when presently he passed Bob Judkin, he winked solemnly at that gentleman.

A little later, coming to Bob alone, he whispered hoarsely in his ear.

"There was a party as begun with a G."

"Yes—I remember," said Bob, looking at him wonderingly.

"There's a summink about G. as that party 'as got tired of; she wants to go a bit further down the alphabet. She's a goin' to make it T." With another solemn wink, Mr. Tolderoy glided away, in search of "the party."

Of all that merry party, there was one at least, who, under a brave exterior, carried a somewhat heavy heart. This Christmas time was to have been the very happiest Eva Judkin had known; the days of struggling and sorrow were over forever—the future was clear and bright before her and her lover—and all the happy bells that rang in the glad

Mr. Tolderoy's conduct is peculiar.

nently practical. She had the tenderest and the most affectionate heart in the world; but she also had a very strong notion of what was due to her, and desired, before all things, to be properly appreciated. Her first impulse was to tear the letter into fragments; to stamp her foot; and to declare that she was of the same mind, and would have none of him. Her second impulse, five minutes later, was to gather up the pieces of the letter penitently—to kiss them a hundred times—and to vow that she could never love any one else; and that she would go after him, barefoot if necessary, and seek him out, and bring him back to her. Then, pride came to her rescue again, and the first mood returned, and she strove to forget all about her lover.

She was the merriest of them all at dinner, and entered boisterously enough into the mad dance which followed; no one should say, she determined fiercely, that she had any regrets for the man who could so lightly cast her aside. But, through it all, she longed for solitude—longed to get away from all the noise and riot—alone with her own sad thoughts.

In the midst of one of the dances, when her partner was the tall youth with no particular features, who played juvenile parts in the nightly shows, she saw her father, who sat at one side of the room, beckoning to her; she made an excuse, and got

across to him. He put into her hand a letter, in a soiled envelope.

"A boy from the town has just brought this, my dear," said Bob. "He says he couldn't find the place, but that the note was given to him more than an hour ago. It is addressed to you."

She thanked him, and took the note, with a beating heart and a burning face. Here, at last, was something better; Frank had repented—he could not stay away from her—he was coming to her—he was near at hand, at this moment. She could not bear the sight of curious eyes; slipping the precious thing into her bosom, she hurried out of the booth, into the cold, still night.

A flaring naphtha lamp had been hung to one of the supports of the front of the booth; and, as she stood on the little wooden gallery, she could read the note quite easily. There was no one about; the fair was deserted, and only the trodden snow stretched below her, without a sign of life upon it; in the distance were the canvas booths and shows, dotted about here and there. She tore open the note, and read it eagerly.

"I write this at an inn in the town. I must see you. When last we met, you derided me, and mocked me; I am willing to forgive that, if you will be reasonable. For your father's sake, as well as your own, it is imperative that you see me—

and alone. I will be outside the booth, at midnight; refuse to see me, and I can let loose such disaster upon you as will sweep away everything from you, and leave you homeless. Understand—I will see no one but you; I mean no harm to you—only good. And I can avert the disaster of which I speak, if you permit me to do so.

"GILES OUSELEY."

As she stood there, against the dark background of the booth, on which was daubed the fantastic pictures, which represented some of the wonders which went on within on ordinary occasions, with her head uncovered, and with the lights and shadows thrown by the flaring lamp flickering over her, she seemed like a figure come from a world which was not that of the sordid common things about her. She wore a white dress, simply made; and two men who watched her, although she did not see them, had, perhaps, the mutual thought that she looked like some gentle fairy—some spirit of the peaceful night—looking out upon the snowy world.

One was an old and worn and weary creature, shaking with fear and cold and famine, who stood at a little distance, hidden by some trees, and watched her. Behind him—somewhere out there in the darkness—staring grimly up at the stars, lay a dead man; before him, in a hopeless journey

The snow fairy.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

through the world, lay want and misery, and shame and death. Yet this forlorn wretch, that once was Andrew Judkin, would not have undone what had happened, though all hell yawned for him. On this night, when he stood—homeless and hopeless, and haunted by a thousand fears—on this night, when memory had come back to him, fully and strongly; and he knew who he was, and where he was—the stars above him shone with a calmer, stronger light, in his eyes, than they had ever shone before. Blunderingly, along devious ways, and through foul and awful places, this man had been brought to the knowledge no words or prayers or entreaties had ever been able to teach him. Blunderingly, too, yet with a glad heart; like a little child that has fumbled through a lesson, and blotted it with tears, and yet sees it straight at last; so this man saw the end in sight, and thanked God for it. He knew who this girl was, who stood above him; his heart, that in the old time had never yearned for any living thing, yearned for her now; and his one sorrow was that he could not take her hands, and tell her who he was. But that must never be, while Andrew Judkin lived among men.

The other man, who stood some distance away, hidden in the shadow of one of the closed booths, was young and strong, with all life opening out before him, and all the world waiting to be conquered; yet with life a poor and barren thing, and

the world not worth conquering, because this girl was far from him, and because he could never hold her again in the dear intimate clasp he once had done. Despite his letter, Frank Maddison had been drawn to look for her; had ventured to make a timid inquiry at the big house; and had been sent on to Barking. The old show was familiar to him, and he found it easily enough. And now, hungrily and sadly, he watched from the darkness the bright little creature he had lost.

Eva Judkin read the note through, three or four times; remembering the man who had written it, she began to be filled with a dreadful fear of what he could do. With the quick mind of a woman, she overleapt everything else, and came at a bound to the fortune. This man Ouseley had put it within their grasp, in a moment; might not the power be his to take it away, in a moment also. She thought of that happy old man within the booth, dispensing hospitality to all who had known him, and been good to him in his days of struggling; then she conjured up a mental picture of poor Bob Judkin, in the booth again, in the old fashion, starving cheerfully, and treading patiently along that road which had no ending. Very slowly, and trembling to think of all that might happen, she came down the steps from the little gallery, and stood on the snowy ground, and looked about her.

Do what he would, Frank could not help, in that

moment when she was so near to him, starting forward toward where she stood in the light of the stars. She saw that dim shadow of a man, and thought it was the man who had written to her, and whose note she held then in her hand. Looking toward him, she said, quite quietly, yet loudly and clearly enough to be heard distinctly—

"I am here—I am waiting for you."

With a cry, Frank bounded forward, and caught her in his arms; and if ever a trembling, quaking little maiden was astonished, surely that trembling, quaking little maiden was Eva, at that moment. If the man she loved had dropped from the clouds, straight into her arms, she could scarcely have been more surprised. And she hugged him, and clung to him, and cried and laughed—and held him away and looked at him—and hugged him again, like one possessed.

"Oh, Frank—where did you come from?" she cried. "I never thought to see you again; I thought you meant to enlist for a soldier—or run away somewhere, to the other side of the world—and grow a beard—and come back, when I was old and ugly, and had forgotten all about you. Not that I ever could forget you," she cried, hugging him again, "not if I lived for a thousand years, and tried hard to forget you all the time; and, oh—I never was so glad in all my life to see you, as I am to-night!"

"I never meant to come back to you," he whispered. "Only I saw you standing there, like a fairy, in this desolate place, amid the snow; and all my heart cried out to you—because——"

"Because you loved me," she breathed, with her lips seeking his. "Because—no matter whether I'm rich or poor, you are going to hold fast to me, and shield me against every rough wind that blows—protect me from everything that threatens. Frank—never write to me again as you wrote to me to-day; never speak to me of separation; never hint to me that any foolish pride of yours shall take you from me, and leave me lonely. The time may come when I shall have to meet sorrow—and I am only a weak girl, and am not strong enough to face sorrow alone. With you, I can face anything. I am not afraid of anything that comes out of the darkness to threaten me—— Who's that?"

Another shadow was coming toward them across the snow—coming slowly and hesitatingly. Fearful of the threat she had read such a little time before, she drew closer to her lover, and watched the approaching figure. It drew nearer, and stopped, and looked entreatingly at her. It was that of an old man, dressed in ragged garments that clung about him as though they had recently been wet.

"You have nothing to fear," said Andrew Judkin, in a low voice. "Your—your father was kind

to me—not long since—I forget when it was—and I have come to him, to beg again."

"My father will not refuse any one who needs help," said the girl, gently. "Who are you?"

"I—I don't know; that doesn't matter," he said. "And I don't come to beg for myself; I need nothing. But there is an old woman—who once worked for—for your uncle—Andrew Judkin—who died. She is poor—and helpless—and——"

"Is her name Bleak?" she asked, quickly. "Because my father heard of her, from Mr. Ouseley. Mr. Ouseley thought that she might come begging to my father, and wished to warn him against her."

"She was turned away most unjustly," said Andrew, eagerly. "Don't heed what this man Ouseley has said; I implore you, with all the strength that is left to me, not to heed anything he says against her. She is poor and helpless, but as honest as sunlight; she has a little child depending on her. For God's sake——"

"I believe you; if it is any pleasure to you to know it, let me tell you that she shall not want for anything," said Eva, quickly. "Where am I to find her?"

He hurriedly told her the address, and gave her what particulars she needed. After looking long at her, he seemed to whisper something to himself, and turned away; came back again, and stood humbly

before her as before, shuffling his feet awkwardly in the snow.

"I—I knew—knew your uncle—the man who was drowned, my dear," he said, slowly. "I only knew him slightly; but I think—I know he was not quite so hard a man as you might think. He—he's dead, you know; but if he could know, he might be glad to think that you carried him gently in that good heart of yours; that you thought of him, as one who had been embittered by loneliness and misunderstanding, rather than by anything else."

"I have never thought bitterly of him," said the girl; "I am only very grateful that all his fortune should have come to me, and to my father. But, if you were his friend, surely some bad fortune has come upon you—surely——"

"That doesn't matter," he said, quickly; "that was my own fault. One other word, and I won't trouble you any further. I have a message for you —from a man called Ouseley."

"Yes—yes—I was expecting to see him," she replied, eagerly.

"Ouseley will not come," he said slowly, keeping his eyes averted from her, and striving hard to steady his voice. "He—he has gone away. He —he tried—tried to frighten you, my child; he will never do that again."

"I am so glad," she said, with a sigh of relief. "He did frighten me—horribly."

"Well—that's all over; he won't trouble you any more. You won't forget Mrs. Bleak—will you? Good-bye!"

He had gone a dozen yards or more, when the girl ran after him, and caught his arm, and turned him about so that he faced her. "You mustn't go like this," she said, hurriedly. "You are wet and shivering; is there nothing we can do for you?"

He looked at her slowly, as though not understanding what she meant; then looked up at the quiet stars. "Nothing," he whispered, after a pause. "I have all I need." Looking at her again, in that searching fashion, as though he would carry with him the memory of her face, he smiled, and turned away, limping painfully over the snow. Looking back, in a moment or two, he saw the lovers, drawn close together, passing up the steps to the little gallery; saw the curtain in front of the booth opened to receive them, in a burst of joyous noise and warmth; saw them swallowed up inside. Still with that smile upon his face, Andrew Judkin set out for London.

CHAPTER X

"I know better!"

IT was Christmas night in London town. London streets, in their outward aspect at least, were dreary and miserable, with half-frozen snow trodden under foot, and with pools of icy water in the roads; yet London streets were bright, with a glow and a cheeriness which comes once, at least, in all the toiling year: London men and women had taken this joyous, lusty rogue called Christmas to their hearts, and seemed, in their delight at finding him again among them, as though they would never let him go again. Tired and toil-worn creatures, who could scarce scrape together enough to eat, on all the other days of the year, had scraped a little harder even than usual, to make a little feast, in poor rooms and cellars and garrets; and had, by mutual consent, thrust away from them all thoughts of the weary road that stretched on again, with the ending of this blessed time. This was a rest on the hard road of life; the cold, cheerless dawn of to-morrow might come, and find them wearily taking up their burden; but, for to-night, the burdens had dropped away; and life, to most

of them, was a great game, and they like little children, playing it.

Even one forlorn wretch, racked with pain and weariness, and dragging himself with difficulty through the streets, was touched by the glorious thing, and gladdened, in a sense, by it. In prosperous years, when he had pitied these fools who made merry when they could so ill afford it, he had not understood all that the time meant—had failed to realize how many half-dead hopes sprang to life—how many old bitternesses were buried and put away—how many hearts were touched and softened, that could be touched and softened by nothing else. But he knew now; he understood what was dumbly felt by the lowest and the meanest; he began to see, now that the sorrowful words—"Too late"—must be written against the record of his life, how much he had missed—how blindly he had groped his way along, through sordid and miry places, never raising his head to look toward the stars.

With the coming back of memory to him, he found, to his sorrow, that that strange figure of the Child, that had seemed to guide him before, was gone. He strove hard to remember what it had been like; how it had spoken; whether it had left upon him any injunction as to what he was to do, or what not to do. For the curious thing was, that this man, now that he had come back to sane things, and now that his brain was clear and active, be-

lieved absolutely in the reality of that vision. Once or twice, he tried to reason with himself that this thing he had fancied he saw was merely the effect of a picture upon his mind; but he scouted that idea, and would have none of it. Now, when he stood, in such a pitiful plight, in the desolate streets, his belief in that shadowy guide was so strong, that he found himself looking about, in the hope that he might see it; wrung his hands, in weak despair, because he could not find it.

He had scarcely eaten anything that day, save such poor food as charity had given him; he was so weak and ill that, as he stood alone in the street, it seemed to sway and rock beneath his feet; the lighted houses appeared to be closing in, to crush him. Yet his mind was strong enough; it had never seemed so clear before.

If it is possible to imagine the feelings of a man who has dropped suddenly out of life and its activities in a moment, and is wandering, as it were, in a world of shadows and of dreams, some clew might be obtained to what was in the breast of Andrew Judkin then. In a sense, he had done with this world; like a poor, tired labourer, who has battled along blunderingly, he was glad to be moving toward some rest—and he was not afraid. Indeed, there was no cause for fear; the path upon which he had been led had brought him among strange people—had brought him to the doing of

strange things. All that he had hoped to do was nearly done; weakly and wearily, he tried to remember what else remained to be finished. He huddled himself into the sheltered corner of a stairway, and sat down to think about it.

Now, whether he slept in that quiet spot, and dreamed a dream; or whether, in some strange fashion, he wandered about the city that night, and saw some, at least, of the things that passed before him, it is impossible to say. Probably it was merely a dream—mercifully sent to him, at that late time, to show him what he had done, and what must spring out of the small tragedy in which he had been concerned. Perhaps, too, like men who come near to death, he saw with a clearer vision than he had had before—saw deeper into the wise purpose that had brought him to what he was.

He thought, in his dream, that he went on and on, through the streets, to a place he knew; that he climbed a mean and common stairway—up and up—traversing steep stairs that never seemed to end. As he went, he saw a figure going on before him—the figure of a woman that went hesitatingly, and once or twice seemed to turn back. For some strange reason, there was in his mind a passionate hope that she would not turn back; he found himself, in the darkness, stretching out feeble hands to stop her, whenever she seemed about to retrace her steps. But she went on, and came to

a door, through the chinks of which a faint light showed.

Here she stopped, a long time; here she laid her poor head against the framework of the door, and cried softly, and rocked herself in the darkness, like one in pain. Presently, gathering courage, she softly opened the door, and went in; it seemed to Andrew Judkin, in his dream, that he could look into the room, and see what happened. And he saw an old woman, whose face he remembered, come forward quickly, and hold out her arms to that younger woman, who had stumbled into the room. He thought, too, in his dream, that that younger woman fell at the feet of the elder—as another poor outcast, of old time, fell at the feet of a Man—and hid her face, and wept, and prayed to be left there on the ground.

"Never let me go out into the streets again—never let the stars look down upon me, wandering desolate! For the sake of the little child I've held in my arms—hold me in yours; teach me—out of your simple faith and honesty—how to work and starve, and work again—and be glad. Don't send me away; let me work for you, and for the baby—let me do it—let me do it! Through all these hours, while I have wandered through these awful streets, I've had that baby here—against my heart; she's here now; I may not sin while I hold her! Let me stay—let me work for her—and for you!"

Andrew Judkin thought, in his dream, that Mrs. Bleak dropped down beside that desolate figure, and took it to her poor breast, and whispered to it, in her own common way, something of the divine

"Never let the stars look down upon me, wandering desolate!"

mercy that not all the hardship and cruelty of her life had been able to squeeze out of her. In his dream, too, he seemed to look far ahead, and to see that this was not to change; he seemed to see this younger woman—holding fast to that frail mite—drawn back to better things—saw her striving patiently, at coarse labour, to provide for the

child, and for the old woman; saw, in it all, that this woman held before her—as something to be guarded with her very life—the child who purely bore her own name. He dreamed—as one of the wondrous things he had learned—that this poor soiled creature saw in the child something she herself might have been; and worshipped the child, and toiled for it, for the sake of that fancy.

Looking, in his dream that Christmas night, far out over the wide seas, he saw great ships coming and going; ships on which men made merry, and sang old Christmas songs; so that not all the roar of old ocean, buffeting and tossing beside them, could drown the merriment; ships bringing wealth to the new house of Judkin & Co. And that, too, seemed good and right; for that wealth was to flow out into kindly channels, to help the weak, and the suffering, and the helpless. In his dream, he knew, with certainty, that never again was any poor pleader to be turned away—never any wailing, bent old woman to be thrust into the streets to starve. And that was the best thing of all.

Something was closing about him—softly and gently—something that weighed him down, and blotted out, now and then, the desolate street before him. He was not afraid; and he seemed to know what was coming. But still, through his mind there ran one faint rivulet of thought—one

last thing to be remembered and completed, before that poor, blotted book was closed on earth. Patiently, and with a desperate prayer that he might not lose the power of thought and speech and movement, until that was done, he set about to find what it was.

It came upon him at last like light; and he started to his feet. Somewhere—far away from where he was, a little child lay, in a great house of pain—a child to whom he had, in that time that seemed so far away, done a wrong. Yes—that was the last thing that had to be remembered and finished; thereafter, the child drew him, as a magnet. Staggering on, blindly yet surely—sinking to the ground sometimes, from sheer weakness, yet always muttering to himself that he must find the child, he set out in search of her.

He had some notion—a dim one, at best—as to where the place was. He remembered that night on which he had stood in a certain street, and had seen the child carried to the hospital; he retraced the way now, step by step. Quite suddenly, however, when he was near the place, he stopped, and clapped his hands, and started off in a new direction.

But he had not changed his mind; this was merely a new idea, which had grown out of the first; a strange crazy thought, born in his mind of some subtle knowledge of the needs of a young

child. For, in this later time, Andrew Judkin had grown very young indeed!

It was very late, and but few people were about the streets; even the usual houseless creatures seemed to have found shelter, for that night at least in all the year. He had no fear of molestation on his errand; indeed, it is doubtful if he thought of such a thing. He had reached that strange point in his life, when he felt that he was free of any criticism—when he knew that he must set about to do what was in his mind, recklessly, and without any dread of the consequences.

He came to a great building, in a street of closed shops. Looking cautiously about him, he peered in through the crack of a padlocked door; drew back a little, and glanced up at the windows; and smiled to himself, and rubbed his hands. Finally, going a little way down the street, he dived into a narrow alley; at the bottom of it, he drew himself on to a low wall, and dropped into a yard. It seemed scarcely possible that so much strength could be left to him; but it was the strength of despair and utter recklessness. He would have gone through a raging fire, at that moment, without a thought of stopping.

He broke a window, and drew back a bolt; a moment later was groping his way along a dark passage, listening intently for every sound. There was none, save his own cautious footfalls. Com-

ing to another door, he managed, in some fashion, to wrench it open; and stood at last in the shop itself.

Not gold nor jewels, nor precious things of any kind, as men count them. There may have been money there, but he did not think of that. Yet, in the simple vision of this new Andrew Judkin, he stood in the midst of treasures; and rubbed his hands in glee, at the thought of the spoil he could carry away. The shop was full, from floor to ceiling, with toys.

Wondrous dolls stared at him, goggle-eyed; wooden horses pranced, and shook their tails at him; shops and kitchens and dolls' houses displayed their glittering contents; gaily painted balls rolled at his feet, and begged to be bounced! Wonderful engines waited to be wound up with magic keys, before careering on endless journeys; omnibuses and trams, with perpetual passengers glued to their seats, waited only to find a new line of traffic on nursery floors.

"Toys! This is what I wanted," he muttered to himself, looking round about him where he stood. "I know this man—a hard old flint, who owes me money which he never means to pay. At least, I mean he *did* owe me money. Such a fellow ought not to deal in things like this; hardware is his true business. I'll take some—for the children —for that child, most of all."

He found a bag—a mere common sack—stowed away in a corner; made a rapid selection; and thrust the things into the bag. Getting out of the place, he began to have his first fear as to the results of what he had done; with sudden caution, he left his loaded sack in a corner of the alley, while he looked out to see that the coast was clear. Fortunately for him, there was no one in sight; and he started off, on the last toilsome journey of all.

To an ordinary man, his burden would not have been a heavy one; to Andrew Judkin—broken down and weakened by exposure and want and the injuries he had received—the sack with the light toys in it seemed to bear him down to the earth. He found it necessary, again and again, to rest in dark doorways, and other places; and, every time he rested, that cloud which had seemed to shut out the streets from him descended lower and lower.

He might have been dreaming still, so strangely had the real solid things of life fallen away from him—so strangely had life itself become a dream, and its solid things mere shadows. Now, in his dream, he was going on a last fantastic journey, like some poor old trembling ragged Santa Claus, through the snow-covered streets, this Christmas night.

He came to the great building at last, and stumbled up its steps, and dropped his sack of treasure in the hall. Then, in a moment, every*thing* seemed to fade away from him; he fell in a

tumbled heap beside the toys that were bursting from the sack, and lay there unconscious.

When, a little later, he came to himself, he was in a long ward—in bed, with people bending over him, and whispering. And now, indeed, the cloud had fallen so low, that he could scarcely make out their faces. Dimly, as though the voice came from far away, he heard one of them ask him about the toys. He stretched out a hand, and caught a friendly shoulder, and raised himself in bed.

"For—for the little one," he whispered. "For little children — in pain — Christmas time." He dropped back on the pillows again, and smiled up calmly at the white ceiling.

"But who sent them—and who are you?" So much he made out of the eager questions that were put to him.

"They—they were sent—sent for the babies!" Then, to keep up to the last that which he had so painfully brought about, he added, in a whisper, "Never mind about me—I'm no one."

That was all they could get from him. He heard —again as it were far away—voices whispering together; then those who spoke seemed to move away. At the last moment, he made a sign that brought one of them—a woman—back to him.

"There was—a baby—the prettiest baby—Kitty Bleak——" He could not finish the sentence; but his anxious eyes asked a question.

"Yes; she's in the children's ward below here —number twenty-seven. She's better."

He smiled again at the white ceiling, and turned painfully, and looked into the woman's face. She bent nearer, to catch his eager whisper.

"The best of all the toys—for her." The woman nodded. "One—blue-eyed doll—she'll like that."

The woman nodded again, and put back the straggling gray hair from his face gently, and went away. Again that cloud seemed to come down softly upon him, and to shut out even that quiet world.

The long ward with its trim beds was very still, when Andrew Judkin came fully, and in a moment, to the complete knowledge of where he was; the cloud had been lifted, in some strange fashion; and some last flash of strength had come back to the man. He raised himself in bed, and looked about him with startled eyes; then, with strange cunning, slipped cautiously to the floor; got some of his tattered garments, and put them on. Weakness was stealing over him again, and it took a long time; more than that, he had to watch, lest any one should interrupt him. But it fortunately happened that the nurse was nodding in her chair, only to be wakened by any sound in the ward; Andrew Judkin made no sound at all.

He was like a man at the end of some desperate *race, with* still a little way to go—harbouring every

breath—saving every muscle that he could. For there was still something to be done; the strange pitiful journey he had undertaken so laboriously could not end here.

There was still an accusing thought in his mind, about the baby Kitty. This was the child, at the mere mention of which he had mocked; this was the baby about whom he had been careless as to whether or not it starved. The time was coming, very rapidly, when it would be too late to do anything; and he felt, in some vague fashion, that he wanted to see the child—to assure himself that it was well—to touch its hands; he could not die until he had done that.

In some miraculous fashion, he found it. He had to get out of the ward, and down two long flights of stairs; those who found him afterward marvelled how he did it. But, somehow or other, the power was in him; and he came at last, after a journey that seemed endless, to bed number twenty-seven, in that ward of very little beds indeed.

It was all over now. There was nothing else to struggle for—nothing else to be done. Here was the blessed end of the long journey; to this small mite, lying in her flushed, warm sleep, he had been brought so strangely, through sorrow and shame, and death and misery. Yes—here was the blessed end of it.

And suddenly, in that quiet place, where he

kneeled beside the little bed, there came back to him the vision of that other Child—himself in better days—that had been his guide so long. Not coming, as it had before, with stern, accusing eyes, but standing, a radiant figure, full of a promise of better things yet for this poor tired old creature, who had learned so patiently the lesson he had been set.

"There is no room in life, or in the world, Andrew Judkin, for charity or love or tenderness—eh?" It was the Child who seemed to speak, using words Andrew Judkin had used, in the pride and foolishness of his heart, not so long before. "The poor are poor, through their own vices; the rich are rich, by their own merits. God is good to the man with full pockets."

"No—no—I know better!" whispered Andrew Judkin, feebly. Kitty had stirred softly in her sleep, and one little hand (the one that did not hold a big doll, with the bluest eyes in the world) had strayed outside the coverlet of the bed. Gropingly, Andrew Judkin felt for the small hand; as he touched it, the little warm fingers closed round his own.

"This baby, to whom you hold so fast now, Andrew Judkin, is one of those wretched children who ought never to have come into the world at all, and who do nothing but breed disease and crime *among* us—eh?"

"Don't—don't—I didn't understand," whispered Andrew Judkin, hiding his face. "I—I know better—now!"

"The decent heaven you planned to enter, in your pride, has no place for such a child as this,

"I know better!"

Andrew Judkin," went on the Child. "There is no God of the sick and sorry, that shall take you, this Christmas night—poor sick and sorry blundering

thing that you are—and teach you the last lesson of all, Andrew Judkin."

Solemnly, the old man raised his head, and looked toward that figure he thought he saw; solemnly, looked about him, and looked down at the child, whose little fingers were twined about his own.

"I—know—better!" And it was a cry of joy.

Holding fast to that frail mite, as the last thing he should touch in this world, Andrew Judkin drifted away, to find the God who knows best of all.

THE END

FRANK M. CHAPMAN'S BOOKS.

Bird Studies with a Camera.

With Introductory Chapters on the Outfit and Methods of the Bird Photographer. By FRANK M. CHAPMAN, Associate Curator of Mammalogy and Ornithology in the American Museum of Natural History. Illustrated with over 100 Photographs from Nature by the Author. 12mo. Cloth, $1.75.

Bird-Life.

A Guide to the Study of our Common Birds. With 75 full-page uncolored plates and 25 drawings in the text, by Ernest Seton-Thompson. Library Edition. 12mo. Cloth, $1.75.

Two Editions in Colors, with 75 lithographic plates representing 100 birds in their natural colors. 8vo. Cloth, $5.00. 12mo. Cloth, $2.00 net; postage, 18 cents additional.

Teachers' Edition. Same as Library Edition, but containing an Appendix with new matter designed for the use of teachers, and including lists of birds for each month of the year. 12mo. Cloth, $2.00.

Teachers' Manual. To accompany Portfolios of Colored Plates of "Bird-Life." Contains the same text as the Teachers' Edition of "Bird-Life," but is without the 75 uncolored plates. Sold only with the Portfolios, as follows:

Portfolio No. I.—Permanent Residents and Winter Visitants. 32 plates.

Portfolio No. II.—March and April Migrants. 34 plates.

Portfolio No. III.—May Migrants, Types of Birds' Eggs, Types of Birds' Nests from Photographs from Nature. 34 plates.

Price of Portfolios, each, $1.25; with Manual, $2.00. The three Portfolios with Manual, $4.00.

Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America.

With nearly 200 Illustrations. 12mo. Library Edition, cloth, $3.00; Pocket Edition, flexible morocco, $3.50.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

THE SEVEN SEAS. A volume of poems by RUDYARD KIPLING, author of "Many Inventions," "Barrack Room Ballads," etc. 12mo. Cloth, $1.50; half calf, $3.00; morocco, $5.00.

"The spirit and method of Kipling's fresh and virile song have taken the English reading world. . . . When we turn to the larger portion of 'The Seven Seas,' how imaginative it is, how impassioned, how superbly rhythmic and sonorous! . . . The ring and diction of this verse add new elements to our song. . . . The true laureate of Greater Britain."—*E. C. Stedman, in the Book Buyer.*

"The most original poet who has appeared in his generation. . . . His is the lustiest voice now lifted in the world, the clearest, the bravest, with the fewest false notes in it. . . . I do not see why, in reading his book, we should not put ourselves in the presence of a great poet again, and consent to put off our mourning for the high ones lately dead."—*W. D. Howells.*

"'The Seven Seas' is the most remarkable book of verse that Mr. Kipling has given us. Here the human sympathy is broader and deeper, the patriotism heartier and fuller, the intellectual and spiritual insight keener, the command of the literary vehicle more complete and sure, than in any previous verse work by the author. The volume pulses with power—power often rough and reckless in expression, but invariably conveying the effect intended. There is scarcely a line which does not testify to the strong individuality of the writer."—*London Globe.*

"Mr. Kipling's 'The Seven Seas' is a distinct advance upon his characteristic lines. The surpassing strength, the almost violent originality, the glorious swish and swing of his lines—all are there in increased measure. . . . The book is a marvel of originality and genius—a brand-new landmark in the history of English letters."—*Chicago Tribune.*

MANY INVENTIONS. By RUDYARD KIPLING. Containing Fourteen Stories and Two Poems. 12mo, 427 pages. Cloth, $1.50.

"'Many Inventions' will confirm Mr. Kipling's reputation. . . . We would cite with pleasure sentences from almost every page, and extract incidents from almost every story. But to what end? Here is the completest book that Mr. Kipling has yet given us in workmanship, the weightiest and most humane in breadth of view."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

"Mr. Kipling's powers as a story-teller are evidently not diminishing. We advise everybody to buy 'Many Inventions,' and to profit by some of the best entertainment that modern fiction has to offer."—*New York Sun.*

"'Many Inventions' will be welcomed wherever the English language is spoken. . . . Every one of the stories bears the imprint of a master who conjures up incident as if by magic, and who portrays character, scenery, and feeling with an ease which is only exceeded by the boldness of force."—*Boston Globe.*

By S. R. CROCKETT.

Uniform edition. Each, 12mo, cloth, $1.50.

THE STANDARD BEARER. An Historical Romance.

"Mr. Crockett's book is distinctly one of *the* books of the year. Five months of 1898 have passed without bringing to the reviewers' desk anything to be compared with it in beauty of description, convincing characterization, absorbing plot, and humorous appeal. The freshness and sweet sincerity of the tale are most invigorating, and that the book will be very much read there is no possible doubt."—*Boston Budget.*

"The book will move to tears, provoke to laughter, stir the blood, and evoke heroisms of history, making the reading of it a delight and the memory of it a stimulus and a joy."—*New York Evangelist.*

LADS' LOVE. Illustrated.

"It seems to us that there is in this latest product much of the realism of personal experience. However modified and disguised, it is hardly possible to think that the writer's personality does not present itself in Saunders McQuhirr. . . . Rarely has the author drawn more truly from life than in the cases of Nance and 'the Hempie'; never more typical Scotsman of the humble sort than the farmer Peter Chrystie."—*London Athenæum.*

CLEG KELLY, ARAB OF THE CITY. His Progress and Adventures. Illustrated.

"A masterpiece which Mark Twain himself has never rivaled. . . . If there ever was an ideal character in fiction it is this heroic ragamuffin."—*London Daily Chronicle.*

"In no one of his books does Mr. Crockett give us a brighter or more graphic picture of contemporary Scotch life than in 'Cleg Kelly.' . . . It is one of the great books."—*Boston Daily Advertiser.*

BOG-MYRTLE AND PEAT. Third edition.

"Here are idyls, epics, dramas of human life, written in words that thrill and burn. . . . Each is a poem that has an immortal flavor. They are fragments of the author's early dreams, too bright, too gorgeous, too full of the blood of rubies and the life of diamonds to be caught and held palpitating in expression's grasp."—*Boston Courier.*

"Hardly a sketch among them all that will not afford pleasure to the reader for its genial humor, artistic local coloring, and admirable portrayal of character."—*Boston Home Journal.*

THE LILAC SUNBONNET. Eighth edition.

"A love story, pure and simple, one of the old-fashioned, wholesome, sunshiny kind, with a pure-minded, sound-hearted hero, and a heroine who is merely a good and beautiful woman; and if any other love story half so sweet has been written this year it has escaped our notice."—*New York Times.*

"The general conception of the story, the motive of which is the growth of love between the young chief and heroine, is delineated with a sweetness and a freshness, a naturalness and a certainty, which places 'The Lilac Sunbonnet' among the best stories of the time."—*New York Mail and Express.*

THE STORY OF THE WEST SERIES.

Edited by RIPLEY HITCHCOCK.

Each, illustrated, 12mo, cloth, $1.50.

The Story of the Soldier.

By General G. A. FORSYTH, U. S. Army (retired). Illustrated by R. F. Zogbaum.

"General Forsyth knows whereof he writes, and his book should be read by all who wish to acquaint themselves with the constructive work of the American army, or who are interested in its character and history."—*The Outlook.*

The Story of the Railroad.

By CY WARMAN, author of "The Express Messenger," etc. With Maps and many Illustrations by B. West Clinedinst and from photographs.

"'The Story of the Railroad' brings one into touch with all the forces and conditions that worked for or against the thin line of rails which crept westward, and Mr. Warman may be fairly said to have drawn upon all the sources from which elements needed in his picture cou'd be obtained. The result is a general view of characteristic phases of the life which has a completeness from the standpoint of human interest not realized before."—*Boston Herald.*

The Story of the Cowboy.

By E. HOUGH, author of "The Singing Mouse Stories," etc. Illustrated by William L. Wells and C. M. Russell.

"Mr. Hough is to be thanked for having written so excellent a book. The cowboy story, as this author has told it, will be the cowboy's fitting eulogy. This volume will be consulted in years to come as an authority on past conditions of the far West. For fine literary work the author is to be highly complimented. Here, certainly, we have a choice piece of writing."—*New York Times.*

The Story of the Mine.

As illustrated by the Great Comstock Lode of Nevada. By CHARLES HOWARD SHINN.

"Mr. Shinn writes from ample personal acquaintance with his subject—such acquaintance as could only be gained by familiarity with the men and the places described, by repeated conversations with the survivors of the early mining adventures in the Sierras and the Rockies, and by the fullest appreciation of the pervading spirit of the Western mining camps of yesterday and to-day. Thus his book has a distinctly human interest, apart from its value as a treatise on things material."—*Review of Reviews.*

The Story of the Indian.

By GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL, author of "Pawnee Hero Stories," "Blackfoot Lodge Tales," etc.

"Only an author qualified by personal experience could offer us a profitable study of a race so alien from our own as is the Indian in thought, feeling, and culture. Only long association with Indians can enable a white man measurably to comprehend their thoughts and enter into their feelings. Such association has been Mr. Grinnell's."—*New York Sun.*

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

THE LIBRARY OF USEFUL STORIES.

Illustrated. 16mo. Cloth, 35 cents net per volume; postage, 4 cents per volume additional.

NOW READY.

The Story of Books. By GERTRUDE B. RAWLINGS.

The Story of King Alfred. By Sir WALTER BESANT.

The Story of the Alphabet. By EDWARD CLODD.

The Story of Eclipses. By G. F. CHAMBERS, F. R. A. S.

The Story of the Living Machine. By H. W. CONN.

The Story of the British Race. By JOHN MUNRO, C. E.

The Story of Geographical Discovery. By JOSEPH JACOBS.

The Story of the Cotton Plant. By F. WILKINSON, F. G. S.

The Story of the Mind. By Prof. J. MARK BALDWIN.

The Story of Photography. By ALFRED T. STORY.

The Story of Life in the Seas. By SYDNEY J. HICKSON.

The Story of Germ Life. By Prof. H. W. CONN.

The Story of the Earth's Atmosphere. By DOUGLAS ARCHIBALD.

The Story of Extinct Civilizations of the East. By ROBERT ANDERSON, M. A., F. A. S.

The Story of Electricity. By JOHN MUNRO, C. E.

The Story of a Piece of Coal. By E. A. MARTIN, F. G. S.

The Story of the Solar System. By G. F CHAMBERS, F. R. A. S.

The Story of the Earth. By H. G. SEELEY, F. R. S.

The Story of the Plants. By GRANT ALLEN.

The Story of "Primitive" Man. By EDWARD CLODD.

The Story of the Stars. By G. F. CHAMBERS, F. R. A. S.

OTHERS IN PREPARATION.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

GILBERT PARKER'S BEST BOOKS.

Uniform Edition.

THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY. Being the Memoirs of Captain ROBERT MORAY, sometime an Officer in the Virginia Regiment, and afterwards of Amherst's Regiment. Illustrated. $1.50.

"Another historical romance of the vividness and intensity of 'The Seats of the Mighty' has never come from the pen of an American. Mr. Parker's latest work may without hesitation be set down as the best he has done. From the first chapter to the last word interest in the book never wanes; one finds it difficult to interrupt the narrative with breathing space. It whirls with excitement and strange adventure. . . . All of the scenes do homage to the genius of Mr. Parker, and make 'The Seats of the Mighty' one of the books of the year."—*Chicago Record.*

"Mr. Gilbert Parker is to be congratulated on the excellence of his latest story, 'The Seats of the Mighty,' and his readers are to be congratulated on the direction which his talents have taken therein. . . . It is so good that we do not stop to think of its literature, and the personality of Doltaire is a masterpiece of creative art."—*New York Mail and Express.*

THE TRAIL OF THE SWORD. A Novel. $1.25.

"Mr. Parker here adds to a reputation already wide, and anew demonstrates his power of pictorial portrayal and of strong dramatic situation and climax."—*Philadelphia Bulletin.*

"The tale holds the reader's interest from first to last, for it is full of fire and spirit, abounding in incident, and marked by good character drawing."—*Pittsburg Times.*

THE TRESPASSER. $1 25.

"Interest, pith, force, and charm—Mr. Parker's new story possesses all these qualities. . . . Almost bare of synthetical decoration, his paragraphs are stirring because they are real. We read at times—as we have read the great masters of romance—breathlessly."—*The Critic.*

THE TRANSLATION OF A SAVAGE. $1.25.

"A book which no one will be satisfied to put down until the end has been matter of certainty and assurance."—*The Nation.*

"A story of remarkable interest, originality, and ingenuity of construction."—*Boston Home Journal.*

MRS. FALCHION. $1.25.

"A well-knit story, told in an exceedingly interesting way, and holding the reader's attention to the end."

BY ANTHONY HOPE.

THE CHRONICLES OF COUNT ANTONIO. With photogravure Frontispiece by S. W. Van Schaick. 12mo. Cloth, $1.50.

"No adventures were ever better worth recounting than are those of Antonio of Monte Velluto, a very Bayard among outlaws. . . . To all those whose pulses still stir at the recital of deeds of high courage, we may recommend this book. . . . The chronicle conveys the emotion of heroic adventure, and is picturesquely written."—*London Daily News.*

"It has literary merits all its own, of a deliberate and rather deep order. . . . In point of execution 'The Chronicles of Count Antonio' is the best work that Mr. Hope has yet done. The design is clearer, the workmanship more elaborate, the style more colored."—*Westminster Gazette.*

"A romance worthy of all the expectations raised by the brilliancy of his former books, and likely to be read with a keen enjoyment and a healthy exaltation of the spirits by every one who takes it up."—*The Scotsman.*

"A gallant tale, written with unfailing freshness and spirit."—*London Daily Telegraph.*

"One of the most fascinating romances written in English within many days. The quaint simplicity of its style is delightful, and the adventures recorded in these 'Chronicles of Count Antonio' are as stirring and ingenious as any conceived even by Weyman at his best."—*New York World.*

"No adventures were ever better worth telling than those of Count Antonio. . . . The author knows full well how to make every pulse thrill, and how to hold his readers under the spell of his magic."—*Boston Herald.*

THE GOD IN THE CAR. New edition. Uniform with "The Chronicles of Count Antonio." 12mo. Cloth, $1.25.

"'The God in the Car' is just as clever, just as distinguished in style, just as full of wit, and of what nowadays some persons like better than wit—allusiveness—as any of his stories. It is saturated with the modern atmosphere; is not only a very clever but a very strong story; in some respects, we think, the strongest Mr. Hope has yet written."—*London Speaker.*

"A very remarkable book, deserving of critical analysis impossible within our limit; brilliant, but not superficial; well considered, but not elaborated; constructed with the proverbial art that conceals, but yet allows itself to be enjoyed by readers to whom fine literary method is a keen pleasure."—*London World.*

"The book is a brilliant one. . . . 'The God in the Car' is one of the most remarkable works in a year that has given us the handiwork of nearly all our best living novelists."—*London Standard.*

BY EDWARD NOYES WESTCOTT.

David Harum. A Story of American Life.

Illustrated Edition. With 70 full-page and text pictures by B. West Clinedinst, and other text designs by C. D. Farrand, and a biography of the author by Forbes Heermans. 12mo. Gilt top, uncut, $2.00.

Edition de Luxe. Printed in tints, with copperplate photogravures and other illustrations. 8vo. Large paper, uncut, $10.00 net.

12mo. Cloth, $1.50.

"The newsboys on the street can talk of 'David Harum,' but scarcely a week ago we heard an intelligent girl of fifteen, in a house which entertains the best of the daily papers and the weekly reviews, ask, 'Who is Kipling?'"—*The Literary World, Boston.*

"We give Edward Noyes Westcott his true place in American letters—placing him as a humorist next to Mark Twain, as a master of dialect above Lowell, as a descriptive writer equal to Bret Harte, and, on the whole, as a novelist on a par with the best of those who live and have their being in the heart of hearts of American readers. If the author is dead—lamentable fact—his book will live."—*Philadelphia Item.*

The Teller.

Illustrated. 12mo. Cloth, $1.00.

The publishers of "David Harum" have the pleasure of presenting the only other story written by the lamented Edward Noyes Westcott. Mr. Westcott's business life lay with practical financial matters, and in "The Teller" he has drawn upon his knowledge of life in a bank. It is unnecessary to emphasize the interest attaching to the only other work in fiction done by the author of "David Harum."

Fortunately for the readers of this masterpiece, Mr. Westcott wrote several letters in regard to the book while he was engaged upon the manuscript, and these, with other letters, have been preserved. They have been edited for publication by his sister, and are included in this volume. A biography of Mr. Westcott is added by his friend, Mr. Forbes Heermans, who describes the manner in which "David Harum" was written. Some peculiarly interesting portraits of Mr. Westcott and a picture of his home illustrate the book.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.